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The Catholic
FAMILY LIBRARY,

VOL. I.

CONTAINING
SIR THOMAS MORE:
HIS LIFE AND TIMES,

Illustrated from his own Writings and from Contemporary Documents.

BY W. JOS. WALTER,

LATE OF ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE.

With a Portrait of Sir Thomas More.

LONDON:
CHARLES DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET;
AND SOLD BY
BOOKER & CO., 37, Ranelagh Street, Liverpool; and
JOHN CUMMING, Dublin.

MDCCCLX.

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Thomas More

SIR THOMAS MORE:

HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

ILLUSTRATED FROM HIS OWN WRITINGS, AND FROM
CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTS.

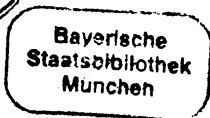
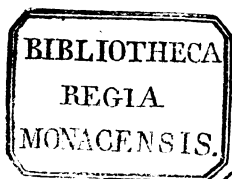
BY W. JOS. WALTER,
LATE OF ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE.

SECOND EDITION.

Like Cato firm, like Aristides just,
Like rigid Cincinnatus nobly poor,
A dauntless soul, erect, who smiled on death.

Thomson.

LONDON:
CHARLES DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET;
AND SOLD BY
BOOKER & CO., 37, Ranelagh Street, Liverpool; and
JOHN CUMMING, Dublin.
MDCCCXL.



ON MORE'S PORTRAIT.

From Holbein's hand, it is the portraiture
Of More, the mild, the learned, and the good ;
'Trac'd in that better stage of human life,
When vain imaginations, troublous thoughts,
And hopes and fears have had their course, and left
The intellect compos'd, the heart at rest ;
Nor yet decay hath touch'd our mortal frame.
Such was the man, whom Henry, of desert
Appreciant alway, chose for highest trust ;
Whom England in that eminence approved,
Whom Europe honoured, and Erasmus loved.

SOUTHEY, *Poet Laureate.*

Printed by J. L. Cox and Sons, 75, Great Queen Street,
Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

P R E F A C E.

IN one of his latest works, the lamented Sir James Mackintosh challenged the zeal of the Catholics as a body. His words are these: "Being now restored to their just rank in society, the Roman Catholics have no longer an excuse for not continuing this useful work:"—he is speaking of Dodd's Church History.* It might be asked whether a greater latitude could not have been given to this appeal, so as to have included the lives and writings of the many eminent statesmen and scholars, both lay and ecclesiastic, who at once illustrated the faith of their fathers, and the age in which they flourished, and who are justly entitled to our grateful regard?

The object of the present volume, as it will be

* Sir James's appeal to Catholic scholarship has not been without its effect. The first part of Dodd's "Church History" has issued from the press, under the able editorship of the Rev. M. A. Tierney, F.S.A. No doubt can be entertained of the patronage of the public to so important a work. The time is to come, when all that relates to the English Catholics in particular, their unshaken loyalty and patriotism, through the most stormy periods of British history, and their patient endurance through ages of suffering and trial, should be familiarly known to their Protestant brethren.

of the series by which it is to be followed, is a humble endeavour to respond to the call thus made, and which, coming from such a quarter, is entitled to our serious attention.

We commence with the Life and Times of Sir Thomas More, one of the most prominent names in the English Catholic annals. This remarkable man claims attention under all the varied relations of the good father, the enlightened statesman, the elegant historian, and the no contemptible champion in the field of controversy.

The sources of our information have been :

1. More's collected English works, edited by his nephew Rastell, in 1557, Black Letter, Folio, pp. 1460.

2. More's Latin Works, including the collection of his and Erasmus's letters. Basle, 1563.

3. The Life of More, by his son-in-law William Roper, first printed in Paris, 1626.

4. The two anonymous Lives of More, preserved among the Lambeth MSS., of which one has been published by Dr. Wordsworth in his "Ecclesiastical Biography." Rastell was known to have written a life of his uncle, but it was never printed. Now the author of the life given by Wordsworth speaks of himself as "collecting the works of More for publication." This avowal appears to identify it as the work of Rastell, and

under his name it will be cited in the following pages. .

5. The *Life of More* which has hitherto gone under the name of "Mr. Thomas More," the great grandson of the chancellor. The Rev. Jos. Hunter has, however, satisfactorily proved it to be from the pen of Cresacre More, his grandson. The references to this work in the present volume will be under the head "Cresacre."

6. The "State Papers of the reign of Henry VIII.;" an invaluable work, published (1830) under His Majesty's commission.

The more recent accounts of Sir Thomas are little else than copies from these works, and throw no new light on his history.

"It is impossible to speak rightly of an age gone by, without allowing it to speak for itself," is the axiom of a modern German historian. The observation will equally apply to men as to eras; and, guided by this rule, it has been the object of the compiler of the present volume, to allow the hero of the piece, as far as possible, to tell his own story in his own words. If an author's true autobiography be his own writings, then it is no presumption to say that entire justice has not yet been done to Sir Thomas's life. It must be confessed that the appearance of the voluminous black letter folio, which contains his works, is not in-

viting, and it has possibly deterred many from examining its contents, and identifying its varied materials with the history of the writer. It has been the endeavour of the present volume to supply that defect; and it is hoped that the writer's researches have enabled him to throw some of the features of More's character into bolder relief. "Some particulars in the life of More," says Sir J. Mackintosh, "I am obliged to leave to more fortunate inquirers." To the praise of having accomplished this the present endeavour can hardly hope to aspire; all the merit to which it can lay claim is that of patient labour and diligent research.

Desirous of re-producing a faithful picture of the time, he has taken pleasure in weaving into his narrative the many simple traits of domestic manners with which the pages of More's family biographers abound. In these faithful records Sir Thomas is brought before us "in the habit in which he lived," and we are transported to the very hearth-stone of his domestic circle. Good taste will not be offended at these household scenes, and will readily teach us to make the necessary distinction between delicacy and fastidiousness. In several recent biographical works, evidence has been given of a disposition to admire and to adopt the simplicity of an earlier age; and, in place of a display of pompous and elaborate authorship, to

allow the graphic and less artificial narration of our forefathers, to find its place. In a word, the truth has been recognised, that, in order faithfully to pourtray the manners of an age, due attention should be had to the *costume of thought* by which it was characterized.

With respect to the historical portion of the volume—the rise of the reformation, the origin and progress of Henry's divorce, &c., it would have been presumption to go over the same ground with Dr. Lingard. All the writer has done has been to avail himself of the "State Papers," and other documents that have recently come before the public, in order to carry out some parts of the subject more fully; as, for instance, the details of Wolsey's embassy to France, the judicial proceedings in the divorce, Cranmer's termination of that affair, the dignified resistance of Queen Catharine to the injustice of her persecutors, &c. To the youthful reader in particular, it is hoped that these graphic details of manners and character will prove acceptable.

The present volume will be immediately followed by a second, containing "THE BEAUTIES of Sir Thomas More, or Selections from his Writings in prose and verse." Such a collection is a necessary sequel to the volume now before the reader, in order to enable him fully to enter into More's cha-

racter, and appreciate his genius and acquirements. Sir Thomas's views, moral and political, are allowed to have been in advance of his age. "Those who know only his *Utopia*," observes Sir James Mackintosh, "will acknowledge that he left little of ancient wisdom uncultivated, and that it anticipates more of the moral and political speculation of modern times, than can be credited without a careful perusal."

In conclusion, the writer wishes it were permitted him to address his readers in the language of that great master of his art, whose genius has imparted an additional interest to this portion of English history :

Things now
That bear a weighty and a serious brow,
Sad, high, and working, full of state and woe,
Such noble scenes as teach the eye to flow,
We here present. Think that ye see before ye
The very persons of our noble story,
As they were living
. Then, in a moment, see,
How soon this mightiness meets misery !
SHAKESPEARE, *Prologue to Henry VIII.*

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SIR THOMAS MORE, HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

1480—1508. *ÆTAT.* 28.

MORE'S YOUTH—EDUCATION—STUDY OF THE LAW —MARRIAGE.

Ancestry of More—Anecdotes of his infancy—Early Education in London—Received into the family of Cardinal Morton—His early talents and wit—Studies at Oxford—Return to London, and application to the Law—Inclination for a Religious Life—Dean Colet—Places himself under his direction—Marries—Is elected to Parliament—Instances of his early Patriotism—Death of Henry VII.

THAT examples of past ages move us more than those of our own time, may, probably, be in part ascribed to the reverence we feel for antiquity, and to the mysterious veneration which hangs around the memory of the illustrious dead. Objects that are viewed through the medium of a softening distance, lose many of those blemishes and inequalities, which approximation allows us to discover. There are some characters, however, which have borne with them to the tomb so few of the failings of our nature, that they have no need of this illusion of antiquity to invest them with an interest not their own. In this number may be ranked the subject of our Memoir.

B

Thomas, the only son of Sir John More, was born at his father's residence in Milk Street, London, in 1480, in the 20th year of the reign of Edward the Fourth, and five years previous to the accession of Henry the Seventh.

Of the public life of his father, we have few particulars up to the time of his appearing as one of the judges of the King's Bench. He is thus described by his affectionate son: "A man courteous and pleasant in his manners, harmless, gentle, full of compassion, just, and incorrupt. He was old indeed in years, but young and hale in bodily strength. After living to see his son Chancellor of England, and thinking he had tarried long enough on earth, he passed willingly to heaven."*

The maiden name of his mother was Handcombe, daughter of Sir Thomas Handcombe of Holywell, in Bedfordshire. The age of portents was not yet gone by; and Dr. Clement, a famous physician of the time, and afterwards the intimate friend of the subject of our memoir, reports of her, that, on the night after the marriage, she saw, in a dream, engraven on her wedding ring, the number and characters of her children; *the face of one shining with superior brightness*. Another presage of the child's future eminence, related by his nurse, is, that one day as she was riding with him in her arms over a piece of water, the horse slipped by accident into a deep and dangerous hole. To save her infant charge, she threw him over a hedge into a field, and having afterwards, with much difficulty, extricated herself from her perilous situation, she found him, to her no

* Camden, in his *Remains*, relates a saying of Sir John, which may not prepossess the fair sex in his favour. He compared a man choosing a wife, "to one who dipped his hand into a bag containing twenty snakes and one single eel—it was twenty to one that he caught the eel!" After this our fair readers will be surprised to hear, that the worthy old gentleman had the resolution to take *three dips* himself; and it will be satisfactory to know that he had the good fortune each time to avoid the serpents; which we are willing to believe existed only in his active imagination.

small surprise, not only unhurt, but sweetly smiling in her face.*

More received the first rudiments of his education in the school of St. Anthony, in Threadneedle Street, belonging to a hospital of the same name, which had been in high reputation since the time of Henry VI. and a learned man, named Nicholas Holt, was his master, under whom, to use More's own expression, he "rather greedily devoured than leisurely chewed" his grammar rules, and surpassed all his school-fellows in understanding and diligent application.

By the interest of his father, More afterwards became an inmate in the house, and attached to the retinue of Cardinal Morton, one of Henry the Seventh's most favoured and valuable ministers. In those days, when not wealth and power only, but knowledge, elegance, and nearly all the refinements of life, were monopolized by a few favoured individuals, there was but little hope of advancement for the aspiring youth of lowly, or indeed of middle rank, but what arose from the expectation of finding a powerful and generous patron. Nor was it resorted to merely with a view to worldly honours; laymen of taste and learning were compelled to avail themselves of this species of patronage, if they wished to enjoy the advantage of the best conversation, and acquire the elegant accomplishments of the times. Persons of respectable condition were, therefore, anxious to offer their sons' services as the price of advantages otherwise unattainable. Like the squire attending the knight-errant of an older period, a young gentleman did not think it beneath his dignity to serve a kind of regular apprenticeship to some noble master; to wait at his table, to carry his train, and perform a hundred little duties, which in our more refined age

* In the dedication of Hoddeston's "History of Sir Thomas More," (1650), is the following quaint allusion to this circumstance: "Sir, I have dealt with him as his nurse did—thrown him over the hedge into your arms, lest his memory should perish in the waters of Lethe."

would be termed "menial offices." By means of this voluntary humiliation, he became known to the great, he found opportunities for acquiring useful information, and was prepared, in those miniature courts, for future eminence in the palace and at the council board.*

The choice made by More's father of a guardian for his son, was a wise and fortunate one. Cardinal Morton was a man of learning, and one of Henry's most able ministers; and his personal virtues secured him a degree of respect and love, which More, in after life, allowed no opportunity to pass without gratefully recording. Thus, in his celebrated "Utopia," we find him dwelling with delight on the Cardinal's excellent qualities; and sketching his picture from grateful recollection. "This reverend prelate," says he, "was not less venerable for his wisdom and virtues, than for the high character which he bore. He was of a middle stature, not broken with age. His look inspired reverence rather than fear. He was gentle in communication, and yet earnest and sage. He would try the force of those that came as suitors to him, by assuming a sharp and inquisitive tone, the better to draw forth their spirit and character, in order to judge of their fitness for affairs. In speech he was firm, eloquent, and pithy. In the law he had profound knowledge; in wit he was incomparable, and in memory prodigious. These qualities, which in him were by nature singular, he had improved by study and experience. The king put much trust in his counsels, and the public weal also, in a

* In a paper written, at a somewhat later period, by the Earl of Arundel, entitled "Instructions for you, my son William, how to behave yourself at Norwich," the Earl thus charges him: "You shall in all things reverence, honour, and obey my Lord Bishop of Norwich, as you would do any of your parents: esteeming whatever he shall tell or command you, as if your grandmother of Arundel, your mother, or myself should say it. In all things esteem yourself as my Lord's page; a breeding which youths of my house, far superior to you, were accustomed unto; for my grandfather of Norfolk, and his brother our good uncle of Northampton, were both bred as pages with Bishops."

manner, leaned upon him. From his youth he had been practised in affairs; and having experienced many reverses of fortune, he had with great cost acquired a vast stock of wisdom; which is not soon lost, when it is purchased so dearly."

Nor was Morton less attached to his ward. "He much delighted in his wit and towardness," and would point him out to the attention of the noble guests who were dining with him.—"This child here, waiting at table," would he say, "whoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvellous man."

We have seen More characterising his father as a "pleasant man;" and he inherited from him the lively and mirthful disposition which distinguished him through life. While in the cardinal's service, we find him signalising himself in the different theatrical entertainments which took place during the holidays; not as an actor, according to our notions of an actor's part, but as a kind of competitor in these contests of extemporary wit and drollery, which formed the delight of that age. Roper thus describes the circumstance: "Though he was young of years, yet would he sometimes at Christmas suddenly step in among the players, and never studying for the matter, make a part of his own there presently, among them, which made the lookers-on more sport than all the players beside." Thus early did he give proof that humour was a natural ingredient in his composition.

1497. His worthy patron seeing "that his ward could not profit so much in his house as he desired, where there were many distractions of public affairs," and wisely judging that so promising a young man ought to enjoy every advantage his country had to offer, sent him to Oxford, where he was entered a member of Christ Church, then known by the name of Canterbury College. He had then just entered on his seventeenth year. He remained two years in the

University, and "profited exceedingly," says Roper, "in rhetoric, logic, and philosophy; proving what wonders wit and diligence can accomplish, when united, as they seldom are, in one principal student. At this period, the celebrated Erasmus visited Oxford, and from this epoch dates the intimacy between these remarkable men, which lasted for life. It was here also he became acquainted with Wolsey, who was at that time bursar of Magdalen College, and with Dean Colet, whose friendship he afterwards so diligently cultivated.

The time in which More entered the university, was propitious for the formation of a classical taste; for Oxford had then the advantage of possessing two men, eminent above any of the age for their knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues. The scholars of whom we speak were Grocyn and Linacre; and, in attending their lectures, More found the treasures of ancient learning, thus thrown open to him, a source of new delight. To use his grandson's phrase, "his whole soul was set upon his books."

More applied with diligence to add the Greek language to his other classical stores; for, at that period, it was a rare attainment; and we shall find in the sequel, that he continued to be a warm friend to the cultivation of that noble language.

At this age, his father wisely withheld from him all supplies of money, but such as were absolutely necessary for his college wants, exacting from him a most rigorous account of his expenses. More felt this a severe privation; yet he was obliged afterwards honestly to acknowledge, that this restraint was, perhaps, the means of saving him from the dissipation and vices he saw around him. Lloyd laconically remarks, that "the college kept him strict, and his father short." * Such discipline was severe; but More afterwards thanked God, "that, at least, it had

* Lloyd's Worthies, c. 16.

allowed him neither the leisure nor the means to be vicious."

1499. This year More quitted the university, and returning to London, took up his residence in New Inn,* to study law. "Here," says Roper, "he very well prospered for his time," and was soon after admitted a member of Lincoln's Inn.

Amidst the bustle and distractions of the capital, and surrounded on every side by examples of idleness, gaming, intemperance, and every vice, More felt the necessity of redoubled watchfulness over himself, wherein, to use his own language, "consisteth the true wisdom of a Christian man; striving lest the handmaid Sense should grow too insolent over her mistress Reason," and having learned the true signification of those words of Christ: "He that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it for life everlasting." Under this conviction he added penance to penance. Temptation assailed him; the conflict was long and severe; he had recourse to much fasting and watching. He seldom allowed himself more than four or five hours for sleep; his bed was a hard bench, or the ground, with a log for his pillow. To these austerities, he also added "a discipline every Friday and high fasting day, thinking that such cheer was the best he could bestow upon his rebellious body." Not content with this, "he used aftertimes to wear a sharp hair-shirt next his skin, which he never left off wholly; no, not even when he was Lord Chancellor of England: which my grandmother," continues Roper, "on a time, in the heat of summer espying, laughed at, not being much sensible of such kind of spiritual exercise; having been carried away in her youth by the vanities of the world, and not knowing 'of what spirit' such men are, as are led by an especial grace to the practice of such austerities."

* Inn was successively applied, like the French word *hotel*, first to the town mansion of a great man, and afterwards to a house where all mankind are entertained for money.—SIR J. MACKINTOSH.

1500. In this year, as we find from his grandson, that More took up his residence near the Charter House, living for four years among the Carthusians, and daily frequenting their spiritual exercises, but without any vow. There are writers who have affected surprise, that a man of his activity of mind, and natural turn for the humorous, should have been able to endure the solitude of a cloister; as if there were not a time for all things, and as if the above qualities were in any way incompatible with rational piety, and man's duty towards his Maker. "He had an earnest mind also to become a Franciscan friar, that he might serve God in a state of perfection; but finding that, at that time, religious orders in England had somewhat degenerated from their ancient strictness, and fervour of spirit, he altered his mind. He had also, after that, together with Lilly, a faithful companion of his, a purpose to become a priest: but God had allotted him for another estate; not to live solitary, but that he might be a pattern to married men, how they should carefully bring up their children, how dearly they should love their wives; and how, while they employed their endeavours wholly for the good of their country, they should at the same time faithfully follow the virtues of religious men, as piety, charity, humility, obedience, and chastity."

1503. The death of Elizabeth, queen to Henry VII., and mother of Henry VIII., which happened this year, afforded More an occasion for the exercise of his poetical talent. The following lines from the "Rueful Lamentation," are not deficient in vigour. The illustrious deceased is supposed to utter the sentiments.

Oh ye! that put your trust and confidence
 In worldly joy and frail prosperity;
 That so live here, as ye should never hence,
 Remember death, and look here upon me;
 Methinks ensample cannot better be:
 Yourself well wot, that in this realm was I
 Your Queen but late—and, lo, now here I lie!

Where are our castles now, where are our towers
 Thru, goodly Richmond, soon art gone from me;
 At Westminster, that costly work of yours,
 Mine own dear lord, now shall I never see.
 Almighty God, vouchsafe to grant that ye
 For you and your sons well may edify!
 My palace bulided is, and, lo, now here I lie!

1504. About this period, we find him delivering lectures on St. Augustine's great work *De Civitate Dei*, in the church of St. Lawrence, Old Jewry. We learn from Erasmus, that these lectures were numerous attended, and that neither the old and experienced, nor the most dignified churchmen of the land, were ashamed to derive sacred wisdom from the young layman. It is pleasing to find that Grocyn, his old Oxford master, was one among the number. In our day, avocations so apparently different as law and divinity-lecturing, would scarcely be thought compatible. But it must not be forgotten that in the times we are describing, very considerable knowledge in divinity was essential to the character of a lawyer. The highest legal offices in the state were generally filled by ecclesiastics; and More, as it will be seen, was afterwards a rare instance of a layman being appointed to fill that of Chancellor.

At this period, we find the subject of our memoir giving a laudable proof of discretion in the midst of his devout exercises. Fearful of following his own will, even in meritorious actions, he chose for his spiritual director the famous Colet,* dean of St. Paul's, whose acquaintance, as we have already seen, he had formed at college. "To this ghostly father," to use the words of his grandson, "he was as obedient in all spiritual matters, as he was to his natural father in all dutiful obligation; and from his wholesome

* Dean Colet (b. 1466—d. 1519) was the sole survivor of a family of twenty-two children, and enjoyed a handsome inheritance, which he piously employed in the foundation of the celebrated school in St. Paul's church-yard, in the year 1510, dedicated to THE CHILD JESUS. It is still famous under the name of St. Paul's school, and can boast of a long series of men of eminence.

lessons he derived the greatest profit." On this point, we have pleasure in quoting Mr. Tytler: "Though educated in the rigid school of Colet, his severities and inflictions centered in himself—to others he was indulgent and humane; while the sweetness of his temper, his ready forgiveness of injuries, his wide and unostentatious charities, and the courage with which he was ever ready to peril his life for the faith, evinced that his was the genuine fasting, and holy penance of the heart." (*Life of Henry VIII.* p. 57.) Stapleton has preserved a letter from More to Colet, which confirms the great respect and regard in which he held this distinguished ecclesiastic; and as it presents a natural and pleasing picture of the state of his mind at this important period of his life, the reader will not be displeased to see it translated.

"As I was walking lately in Westminster Hall, where a law case had employed me, I chanced to meet your servant lad. I was delighted at the sight of him, for he was always a favourite of mine, and more especially as I thought he could not be here without you. Judge, then, of my disappointment, when he informed me you were not returned. For what can be more grievous to me than to be deprived of your sweet conversation, whose wholesome counsel I was wont to enjoy, whose engaging familiarity was so refreshing to me, by whose impressive discourses I have been incited to devotion, by whose life and example I have been edified and instructed; in a word, in whose very countenance I have found contentment of heart. Having under such auspices once felt strength and confidence, deprived of them I am utterly cast down. What is there in this town to incite any man to a good life? Or rather, what is there that doth not, by a thousand allurements, draw him from the path of virtue, be his dispositions ever so good? On whatever side we turn, what do we hear but, on the one hand, the voice of pretended love, or of insidious flattery, and, on the other, fierce quarrels,

strife, and litigation. Wherever we cast our eyes, what do we see but tavern-keepers, cooks, &c., who administer to the appetite, to the pleasures of the world, and to the Evil one who is the prince thereof. The very houses rob us of a good part of our light, scarcely suffering us to behold the sky; for it is the height of the buildings, and not the circle of the horizon, that bounds our prospect. It is for this that I can the more readily pardon you for preferring a country life. There you find simple souls, void of our city craft. Wherever you turn your eye, it is cheered by agreeable prospects; the fresh air invigorates, while the aspect of the heaven delights you; you find nothing there but bounteous gifts of nature, and saintly tokens of innocence. Yet would I not have you so wholly taken with these delights, as not to return to us as speedily as may be. If the city displease you, as well it may, yet the country about your parish of Stepney, while it claims your care, will also afford you comforts like those you now enjoy. The country people are harmless in comparison with the inhabitants of the city, whose crowded state is infectious both for body and soul, and demands more skilful physicians. It is true that there sometimes come into your pulpit at St. Paul's, men who promise wonders in curing the spiritual diseases of the people, but when all is said and done, their lives are so little in accordance with their precepts, that they rather increase than alleviate the spiritual complaints of their hearers. Sick men are not to be persuaded to let those attempt their cure, who, God wot! are more sick themselves; for a leper to attempt to treat a leper, would only excite contempt and aversion. But if those are accounted the fittest to effect a cure, in whom the sick have the greatest confidence, where can one be found so competent to the task as yourself? How great the trust reposed in your experience of souls, is manifested by the deep anxiety felt for your return. Return, then, at length, my dear Colet,

either for your Stepney's sake, which bewails your absence day by day, as doth a child that of its mother, or else for London's sake, which is your native place, and which you should naturally regard as a parent. Meanwhile, I pass my time with Grocyn, Linacre, and Lilly; the first being, as you know, the director of my life in your absence; the second, the master of my studies; and the third, my dearest companion in all I undertake. Farewell, and continue to love me as you have hitherto done." Colet in his turn admired his disciple, and was heard to exclaim: "That England had but one true wit, and that was young Thomas More."*

1507. It was by the advice of his spiritual director, that More, about this time, decided upon settling down in life in the marriage state. In the number of his friends was Mr. John Colte, of Newhall in Essex.† He was a gentleman of good family, who had three daughters, whose personal accomplishments and "honest conversation" attracted the attention of More, who was now in his twenty-seventh year. In the choice which he made; we have a remarkable instance of that peculiarity of character, that spirit of self-renunciation, which distinguished him through life. It appears that inclination directed him to the second of these young ladies,‡ "and yet," says Roper, "when he considered within himself, that this would be a grief, and a kind of underrating

* Henry the Eighth was so persuaded of the merit of Dean Colet, that on occasion of some charge attempted to be made against him, he was heard to exclaim: "Let others choose what doctor they please, Colet is the man for me."—*Burnet*, vol. iii. p. 167.

† This venerable mansion is still in existence, and is now converted into an establishment of considerable repute for the education of young ladies, under the superintendence of the sisters of the Benedictine order.

‡ It has been surmised that to this lady, More subsequently addressed his beautiful Latin poem "To Eliza." It turns on the pleasing reflection, that his affectionate remembrance restored to her the beauty of which five-and-twenty years seemed to others to have robbed her. Competent judges have not hesitated to qualify this poem as one of the most beautiful productions of the 16th century. It will be found in our *Volumes of Selections*, with an attempt at translation.

to the eldest, to see her younger sister preferred before her, he, out of a kind of compassion, settled his fancy upon the eldest, and soon after married her, with all her friends' good liking." There may be some who will admire the philosophy of More in the instance before us, but it may be doubted if he will find many imitators. We learn from Erasmus, that the lady, whose name was Jane, was much younger than her husband, and had never quitted the society of her parents and sisters in the country. This, he adds, was the more agreeable to his friend, as he had a better prospect of moulding her character to his own. In order to be near his father, we find More settling himself in a house in Bucklersbury, where he applied himself to his profession with renewed diligence and zeal. At the same time, he appears to have spared no means in improving his wife's mind, and rendering her life happy. By him, she was instructed in polite literature, and in music, which had always been his delight, and in which he is represented as having been a tolerable proficient. There was every prospect of long years of happiness for the worthy pair; but man proposes, and God disposes, and this scene of domestic enjoyment was broken up by her death, six years after their union, she having borne her husband several children, of whom a son and three daughters survived her.

The year following his marriage, More was elected to a seat in the House of Commons, and found an early opportunity of discharging a difficult duty to his country. Henry the Seventh having resolved to marry his daughter Margaret to James the Fifth, of Scotland, applied to the Commons for a subsidy, rather, as would appear, for the gratification of his ruling passion, avarice, than by way of dower for his daughter. Be it as it may, there was some dislike evinced, as well to the amount, as to the object of the sum applied for. That the continued and insatiable demands of the king had thoroughly tired out the

Commons, is evident from the fact, that the Scottish match was a popular one, and had received the warmest approbation of the citizens of London, and of the nation generally: yet More, young as he was, and unknown in the field of politics, boldly ventured to stand forth against the demand, and, by his eloquence, and the force of his reasoning, strengthened the courage of the Commons, and procured its rejection. This was indeed a bold step, surrounded as the young orator was by the servile minions of power. One of these, of the name of Tyler, hastened to inform the king that a beardless boy had frustrated his purpose, and Henry, incensed by such an opposition to his darling propensity, determined on seeking revenge. But in all the harsh measures to which this monarch had recourse, an accession to his purse was the more immediate object, and More was not possessed of wealth: *he*, therefore, was suffered to escape, but his father, the aged judge, proved a more tempting prey. On some groundless charge, Sir John More was arrested, committed to the Tower, and there confined till his liberty had been purchased by the payment of a hundred pounds, a sum equal to nearly a thousand in the present day. In the meantime, it was deemed prudent for the real offender to keep out of the way, and young More gave up his practice at the bar, and retired from all public offices, but not before an attempt was made to entrap him. Bishop Fox, meeting More shortly after the scene in the Commons, called him aside, and pretending great kindness, promised that if he would be guided by his advice, he might be soon restored to the king's favour. But it afterwards appeared, that the prelate's design was to inveigle him into a confession of his offence, that punishment might be inflicted on him under a semblance of justice. More had, however, the prudence, or the good fortune, to escape the snare. Whitford, the bishop's chaplain, was his intimate friend, and when consulted by More, he advised him

by no means to follow the counsels of the minister, "who," he added, "would be too cunning a Fox for him." That this advice was wise, appears from a circumstance which occurred some years after. When Dudley and Empson were sacrificed to popular resentment, under Henry the Eighth, and were on their way to execution, the former saw More among the crowd, and thus addressed him: "Oh, Master More! God was your good friend that you did not ask the king's forgiveness, as many would have had you do; for if you had done so, perhaps you would have been in the like case with us now."

It is hardly necessary to add, that More did *not* return to the bishop. So apprehensive, indeed, was he of the king's resentment, that, not satisfied of the security of his retreat, he is stated to have meditated a voyage abroad,—an intention which was prevented by the death of Henry the Seventh, which took place on the 22d of April, 1508.

It has been observed that, in the instance before us, More began his professional career with a greater display of integrity than is ever convenient to courts and ministers. More's conduct throughout life is a proof, that the "conveniency" here spoken of, had no weight with him. On more than one occasion he evinced his conviction of the truth—"that the service of our country is not a mere chimerical obligation, but a real and solemn duty, and that a good man will exert all the means in his power to perform it."

We learn from More's grandson, that his retreat was not spent inactively—"he studied the French tongue at home, sometimes recreating his wearied spirits on the viol." Here he also perfected himself in most of the liberal sciences, as music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. He moreover grew to be a perfect historian; his chief help in all these labours being his happy memory, of which he thus modestly speaks: "I would I had as good a wit,

and as much learning, as I have memory, for that rarely faileth me."

During the leisure which this retirement afforded him, More appears to have composed his "Life of John Picus of Mirandola," and to have translated several of his epistles and other works. They are found inscribed as a new-year's gift "Unto his entirely beloved sister in Christ, Joyence Leigh." This dedicatory epistle is in More's best manner, a pleasing proof of his piety and affection. It will have a place in our *Selections*. He also composed, about this period, a little volume of epigrams, and other poetical pieces, which were much praised in their day, and will still be read by the classical scholar with pleasure. We have also some poetical pieces in English from his pen, among which, "A Merry Jest, how a Serjeant would learn to play a Friar," has been much spoken of, and is supposed to have suggested to the celebrated Cowper the idea of his popular tale of John Gilpin. (*Vide Selections.*)

CHAPTER II.

1508—1517. *ÆTAT.* 36.

**MORE UNDER-SHERIFF OF LONDON—AMBASSADOR
TO FLANDERS—KNIGHTED AND ACCEPTS OFFICE.**

Accession of Henry VIII.—his youthful character and education—
Marriage with Catharine—More quits his retreat, and is appointed
Under-Sheriff of London—Is visited by Erasmus, and accepts the
dedication of his “Praise of Folly”—Defends it against Dorpius—
Marries—Second time accompanies Tunstal on an embassy to Flan-
ders—Acquaintance he forms there—Letter to Archbishop Warham
—That prelate’s character—The king desires to engage More in his
service—He pleads a cause for the Pope—Is at last persuaded to
accept office—Is made Master of the Requests—Receives the honour
of knighthood, and is made a Privy Councillor.

THE year 1508 witnessed the accession of Henry the Eighth. He was, as is well known, a second son. His elder brother, Arthur, at the age of fifteen, had married the Princess Catharine of Spain, daughter of the famous Ferdinand and Isabella.

The two young princes were brought up by their father under a system of wise and strict discipline ; it being his endeavour to guard them against the perilous temptations of a court, and to encourage them in all useful studies. Henry was destined, it is said, for the church,* and to this end he received the benefit of as learned an education as the age could bestow—the king contemplating his accession to the primacy of England, “in order,” says Herbert, “to provide for him without charge to the crown, and leave a passage open to his ambition.”†

* Men laugh with’in themselves to see such tricks:
Babes in the cradle heirs to Bishopricks!

STORER’S Rise and Fall of Wolsey, 1590.

† A writer [Hume], who did not allow his matchless acuteness as a metaphysician, to disturb the sense and prudence which are more

In the fond care, pious counsels, and exemplary virtues of his good mother, the Countess of Richmond, Henry also enjoyed a rare advantage, to which his future life unfortunately but ill corresponded. Erasmus has left us so pleasing a picture of the royal school-room, that there needs no apology for introducing it. "Thomas More," says he, "who had paid me a visit when I was Lord Montjoy's guest, took me a walk to the next country seat. It was there the king's children were educated, with the exception of Arthur, who had then attained maturity. On entering the hall, we found the whole family assembled; and were surrounded, not only by the royal household, but by the servants of Montjoy also. In the middle of the circle stood Henry, then only nine years old, but even at that early age bearing in his countenance an expression of royalty, a look of high birth, and at the same time full of openness and courtesy. On the right stood the Princess Margaret, a girl of eleven years, afterwards married to James the Fourth of Scotland. On the left was Mary, a child of four years, engaged in play; while Edmund, an infant in arms, completed the group. More, with Arnold our companion, after paying his compliments to little Henry, presented to him some piece of his own writing. I forget what it was. As for me, I had not anticipated such a meeting, and having nothing of the kind with me, I could only promise that I would shortly show my respect to the prince by some similar offering." In some further remarks which Erasmus makes on this charming family picture, we find Henry requesting this celebrated scholar to correspond with him—a trait of character in which may be traced a germ of that learned vanity

valuable qualities in an historian, has deplored the time wasted by the royal youth on the writings of St. Thomas of Aquinas: rightly, if the acquirement of applicable knowledge be the sole purpose of education; but not so, certainly, if it rests on the supposition that any other study could have more strengthened and sharpened his reasoning powers.—SIR J. MACKINTOSH.—*Hist. of Eng.* vol. ii. 97.

which, at a later period, animated the Defender of the Faith, and the antagonist of Luther.

Henry's accession was hailed by all with unaffected joy; for Henry VII., his father, as we have already had occasion to remark, had never been a popular prince. In this new and dangerous pre-eminence, Henry was at once surrounded by a host of those sycophants who are always found basking in the sunshine of a court, and the youthful monarch was assaulted with adulation sufficient to endanger the strongest virtue.* Till this period, however, as we learn from the best authority, Henry continued to give hopes of future excellence; "he possessed," says Cardinal Pole, "a disposition from which every thing excellent might be expected."

One of the first acts after his accession, was to bring before his council the already agitated question of his marriage with Catharine, to whom he continued to express an undiminished attachment. The objections that had been raised on the question of her having been the wife of his deceased brother, yielded to the force of a papal dispensation, and to the solemn assertion of Catharine, which she was ready to confirm by oath, and by the attestation of several matrons, that her former nuptials with Arthur had never been consummated. The marriage accordingly took place with great pomp and rejoicings, Catharine being married with the ceremonies appropriated to the nuptials of a maiden; she was dressed in white, and wore her hair loose. The graces of her person derived additional lustre from the amiable qualities of her heart.† For several years the king

* Mr. Sharon Turner, the great panegyrist of Henry, has quoted some of the fulsome addresses to the young monarch on his accession, and, with more credulity than judgment, construes them into proofs of his favourite's powers of mind, and excellence of disposition; the more observing reader will turn with disgust from their perusal, and feel disposed to wonder that the grossness of the flattery did not sooner achieve the work of ruin.

† Doubts have been entertained as to Catharine's personal attrac-

boasted of his happiness in possessing so accomplished and virtuous a consort, but his situation exposed him to temptations which he wanted the grace and the courage to resist, and he became implicated in several dishonest amours. Still he was compelled to admire the meekness and unpretending virtues of his royal consort, and her prudence continued for a long time to act as a salutary check upon the violence and brutality of his nature.

Without sacrificing any of those qualities that embellish a court, Catharine, amidst all its gaieties, practised all the severe virtues of a recluse. Saunders informs us, that she arose at midnight to prayer, and yet at five in the morning left her pillow and dressed for the day. Under her royal garments she wore the habit of St. Francis, into whose third order she had been admitted. She kept the fasts with great rigour, and on the vigils of the festivals of the Blessed Virgin took only bread and water. She confessed twice a week, heard mass every day, and spent some hours in her chapel, reciting the office of our Blessed Lady. During an hour or two after dinner, she read the Lives of the Saints, while her maids of honour were standing round her. Before the hour of supper, she spent part of another hour in the chapel, and partook very sparingly at that meal. She studied personal mortification, for during all her protracted prayers she knelt on the stone pavement without a cushion. Nor was Catharine more distinguished by her piety, than by her love of

tions. Hall expressly says, "in person beautiful," and More has thus described her.

*Ignæ vis oculis, Venus insidet ore, genisque
Est color, in geminis qui solet esse rosæ—
Immo etiam vultu virtus pellucet ab ipso :
Est facies animi nuncia aperta boni.*

On that fair brow has Venus fixed her throne,
Those eyes dart forth a lustre all their own,
Thy cheeks, twin roses blushing on one stem :
But, oh ! thy virtue is a priceless gem,
Which shines reflected with a double grace,
In the pure faithful mirror of thy face.

W.

literature. "The queen," says Erasmus, "is a friend to letters, which she happily learned from her infancy." He describes her to the Duke of Saxony, as "elegantly learned," and adds: "I so love the piety and erudition of this illustrious woman, which are a reproach to our sloth and corruption of manners, that I seem to receive a benefit to myself, if I can do any thing pleasing to her. How rare is it to see a woman, born and brought up amidst the delights of a court, which corrupt even the best minds, repose all her delight in prayer, and in reading the divine Volume."

More, now in his thirty-fifth year, reappeared in the general reanimation at the commencement of a reign, which he was destined to illustrate by his greatness and his misfortunes.

He appeared as the inaugural poet of the new epoch, and exercised his classical pen in a Latin poem on the coronation, which was celebrated with all the pomp and circumstance of which that age was so fond. He draws a contrast by no means favourable to the late monarch, of whose avarice and injustice he had so recently been the victim. The dedication concludes with a neatly turned compliment to Henry, at the expense, however, of his father: *Vale, princeps illustrissime, et—qui novus ac rarus regum titulus est, amatissime*, (most illustrious, and—what is a new and rare title for a king, *most beloved* prince, Farewell.)

1510. It was known that, shortly after Henry's succession, More filled the situation of under-sheriff of London, but his biographers were at variance as to the precise year. By a reference to the city records, Sir James Mackintosh has ascertained that the date of his first appointment to this office was March 3, 1510. "It is apparent," says Sir James, "that either as a considerable source of his income, or as an honourable token of public confidence, this office was valued by More; since, in 1516, he informs Erasmus that he had declined a handsome pension

offered to him by the king; and that he believed he should always decline it; because, either it would oblige him to resign his office in the city, which he preferred to a better, or if he retained it, in case of a controversy of the city with the king for their privileges, he might be deemed by his fellow-citizens, to be disabled by dependence on the crown from sincerely and faithfully maintaining their rights."

Erasmus tells us, that this office, though not laborious, for the court sits only on the forenoon of every Thursday, is accounted very honourable. No one who ever filled this situation, went through more causes than More; no one decided them more uprightly; often remitting the fees to which he was entitled from the suitors. His deportment in this capacity endeared him extremely to his fellow-citizens. Nor in the discharge of this office, were opportunities wanting for the exercise of his characteristic humour. His wife had been presented with a small dog, which at once became a favourite, and was kept with great care. It turned out, however, to be the property of a beggar who had lost it, and who came to More to complain that his property was forcibly withheld from him. More sent for his lady and the dog, and stationing her at the upper end of the hall, as the worthier person, and the beggar at the lower end, he said he sat there to deal justice impartially to all; and he desired each of them to call the dog. The little favourite immediately forsook his new mistress, and ran to the beggar: so that Lady More was compelled to indulge her partiality by purchasing the animal.

The fame of an accomplished scholar, whose name we have before had occasion to mention—Erasmus, had now begun to spread. More had long been sensible to his merits, though not inattentive to some of the weak parts of his character, which now began to display themselves. The acquaintance they had formed at Oxford, cherished by the similarity of

their studies, had ripened into a strong attachment, and we find them maintaining a correspondence.

This year he wrote to More expressing a desire to revisit England. To facilitate his journey, More sent him a bill of exchange, for a sum of which one-half was advanced by himself, and the other by Archbishop Warham. On arriving in London, he took up his residence for a time with More, and under his hospitable roof produced, it is said in the course of a single week, his well-known *Moriæ Encomium* (Praise of Folly). This, however, is evidently an exaggeration; nearly two years before he had written to More relative to the work, which he states in his preface to have been composed on horseback, to beguile the tedious hours of his journey from Italy. The fact, therefore, which has so much puzzled the biographers both of More and Erasmus, appears to be, that Erasmus brought with him the rough sketch of his work, to which he gave the finishing hand on the present occasion.

The late lamented Mr. Charles Butler thus characterizes this work. "It is an ingenious satire on the follies of persons in every condition of life. It would be difficult to mention a work which discovers more discernment or wit. Its success was prodigious; popes, kings, cardinals, bishops, princes, barons, all the great, and all the gay, read and admired it. Leo the X. on perusing it, observed, 'Erasmus, too, has his place in the region of folly.' The most honourable testimony in its favour was that of the illustrious person to whom it was dedicated. Martin Dorpius, a Louvaine divine, published some remarks upon it, in which he blamed its general spirit, and some particular passages and expressions. Erasmus answered it by an apologetical reply, which is a perfect model of polemic politeness. He acknowledges that his work had exposed him to censure; he almost laments that it was written, and solemnly declares, that, if he had foreseen the troubles by which the church was,

at no distant period, to be afflicted, he would not have composed a work so gay on subjects which unexpectedly proved so serious. More came to the aid of his friend. In an elegant and conciliating letter addressed to Dorpius, he justified the intention of Erasmus in composing the work; defended many passages and expressions to which Dorpius had objected, and extenuated the apparent culpability of others. Dorpius was appeased: the friendship between him and Erasmus was renewed, and when his old antagonist died, Erasmus celebrated his memory in an elegant and affectionate epitaph." It is somewhat remarkable that, at a later period, More, as we shall have occasion to see, felt himself called upon to employ the same kind of apology in defence of his *Utopia*, that had been used by his friend in defence of his *Praise of Folly*.

More accepted the dedication of the work, regarding it as a mere playful sally of that wit which was congenial to his nature, and little imagining that the work was of a character to promote, even distantly, any views hostile to the faith which he loved and the precepts which he practised; and later, we shall hear him deprecating an appeal to his writings and those of his friend, which, he says, were innocently intended by them, but abused by incendiaries to inflame the fury of the ignorant multitude.

Modern critics, however, have spoken unfavourably of this satire. "Nothing," observes Le Clerc, "can excuse Erasmus for having put into the mouth of Folly things which confound religious truth with idiotism, and honest men with knaves and madmen. No one can be a greater fool than he who sets up for fool-doctor in ordinary." "After the publication of this work," says Knight, "Erasmus was never after looked upon as a true friend of the church. In his *Adages*, he has made an apology to the public for the scandal given them in this satire."

Another of this scholar's valuable friends and

patrons was Lord Mountjoy. Erasmus had composed two declamations on matrimony, one in its praise, the other against it. His patron, Lord Mountjoy, said to him : "I like the first of your treatises so well, that I am determined to marry without loss of time." "But," said Erasmus, "you have not read the second." "No," replied his lordship, "I am content to leave that to you."

But while More found leisure for these literary proflusions, he continued to pursue his legal studies with unremitting ardour, and rose to great eminence at the bar. His conduct was such as to entitle him to be held up as a model of scrupulous adherence to justice, amidst all the temptations of legal sophistry, and the more solid inducements of interest, and of that bribery, which, disguised under a more decent name, was so prevalent in those days. When any cause was offered to him, his first care was to ascertain whether justice was on the side on which he was retained. If he found it otherwise, he rejected the cause, whatever pecuniary inducement might be held out to him, and whatever opportunity it might afford for the display of his talents ; assuring his client that he would not undertake what he knew to be wrong, for all the wealth in the world. With gratuitous kindness, he advocated the cause of the widow and orphan ; while, regardless of interest, he always endeavoured, if possible, to bring contending parties to a private accommodation.

1512. More's first wife, as we have already stated, survived their union only about six years ; and two years after her death, which brings us to our present period, he married Alice Middleton, a widow with one daughter. She was seven years older than himself, and neither handsome nor young—*nec bella nec puella*, as he says in a Latin jingle to his friend Erasmus. His object in making this choice, and the curious manner in which it was brought about, are thus stated by his great grandson. "He entered into

his second wedlock, that his wife might have care of his children, who were very young, and from whom he must of necessity be very often absent. She was of good years, of no great favour nor complexion, nor very rich; by disposition very near and worldly. I have heard it reported, that he wooed her for a friend of his, not once thinking to have her himself. But she wisely answering him, that 'he might speed, if he would speak in his own behalf,' he told his friend what she had said to him, and with his good liking married her, doing that which otherwise he would, perhaps, have never thought to do. And indeed, as I think, her favour would not have bewitched, or scarce even moved any man to love her. But yet she proved a kind a careful mother-in-law to his children, as he was always a most loving father unto them; and not only to his own, but to her daughter also; who afterwards married Mr. Alington, and was mother to Sir Giles Alington. He also brought up together with his own children, and as one of them, Margaret Giggs, afterwards wife to Dr. Clement, a famous physician. She also proved very famous for her many excellent endowments in learning, virtue, and wisdom." Speaking of this marriage, Erasmus says: "The woman More has married is a keen and watchful manager, and he lives with her on terms of as much respect and kindness, as if she had been young and fair." Such is the happy power of a loving disposition, which overflows on all within the range of its influence, be their deserts or attractions ever so slender. "No husband," continues Erasmus, "ever obtained so much obedience from a wife by authority and severe measures, as More won by gentleness and pleasantry. Though now of a certain age, and by no means of a yielding temper, he prevailed on her to take lessons on the lute and viol, which she daily practised over to him." Roper adds, in the simplicity of his heart, "that his father-in-law induced her to learn music, both of the voice and

viol, in order to draw off her mind from worldly things, to which she was too much addicted." In all probability, it was with a view to engage her to seek an agreeable distraction from that fretful anxiety about her domestic concerns, which was her ruling foible, and which would have proved a sad annoyance to a husband not possessed of More's philosophy. The truth is—though, forsooth, the truth should not at all times be spoken—that Alice was unfortunately a scold. "The greatest fault she had," says her nephew Rastell, "was that she would now and then show herself to be her mother's daughter, kit after kind: it is but their nature, you know, to be a little talkative." Indeed, in her general conduct she showed herself altogether incapable of entering into the magnanimity of her husband's character. It is amusing to observe how adroitly More could parry off her reproaches, arresting the outbreaks of her ill-temper by a joke, and smoothing down the roughness of her manner by a pun—for More was an inveterate punster; to that sin he must plead guilty, and he may well be pardoned, for it was his only one. The good dame was not, however, altogether unaware of her failing, and would sometimes make an effort to overcome herself. "Why so merry, Alice?" inquired the knight, on meeting her one day in a more than usually happy mood. "One may surely be merry," said his wife, "for I have been to shrift, and left my old shrewdness behind me in the confessional."—"Ah!" rejoined the knight, shaking his head doubtingly, "but I fear it is only to open a new score."

1513. More's application to his legal duties was unremitting, and yet such was his activity of mind, that he found leisure at this period for historical composition, the fruit of which was afterwards given to the world in his *History of King Richard the Third*. More's grandson speaks warmly in praise of this work: "It is so well penned, that if our chronicles

of England were half so well set out, they would entice all Englishmen often to read them over." This eulogium is confirmed by the fact, that the work has been four times reprinted within the last century. For a more detailed account, the reader is referred to the *Volume of Selections*.

1515. The public life of More may be said to have commenced in the summer of this year, with a mission to Bruges, in which Tunstall, then Master of the Rolls, and afterwards Bishop of Durham, was his colleague. The biographers of More have assigned 1516 as the year of this embassy, but here again a reference to the city records has enabled Sir James Mackintosh to ascertain the precise date. The following is the entry: "Monday, 8th of May, 1515. It is agreed that Thomas More, gent., one of the undersheriffs of London, who shall go over as the King's ambassador into Flanders, shall employ his room and office by his sufficient deputy, until his coming home again." The object of this mission was to adjust certain questions relating to the commercial intercourse of England with the Netherlands.

We have now, for the first time, to mention the name of More in conjunction with that of one of the most remarkable men of this period. Wolsey, then lately invested with the purple, filled the first place in the royal favour. Nothing was done at court but by his advice and through his mediation. The reputation of More had already attracted Henry's attention, and he signified to the cardinal his desire to see that remarkable man attached to the court. On this occasion, at least, we find that the minister acted honestly, and endeavoured to accomplish the wishes of his master. He paid a visit to More, represented to him the importance of his services, and assured him that the royal bounty would recompense them liberally. More was not, however, to be prevailed upon, for the present at least, to exchange the independent station which his ability as a lawyer gave

him, for the more precarious life of a courtier; and the excuses he made were, for this time, admitted. "No man ever strove harder," says Erasmus, "to gain admittance at court, than More endeavoured to keep out of it." As a preliminary step to further concessions, he was, however, prevailed upon by Wolsey to accept the mission in question. The affair appears to have been protracted longer than was quite agreeable to More, though it produced him, on his return, the offer of a pension. To this offer the king's desire to retain More in his service doubtless materially contributed. In a letter written to Erasmus, shortly after his return, we have a very agreeable account of this expedition. "Our embassy," he writes, "for in this, as well as in every thing else that concerns me, you are kind enough to interest yourself, has proceeded favourably enough, save that the affair was protracted beyond the time I had looked for. On my leaving home, I had expected an absence of hardly two months, whereas above six have been consumed in the business. Yet, a result by no means disagreeable arose from this long delay. But seeing the affair on which I went concluded, and observing that other matters, arising one out of the other, appeared the initials of still greater delay—a circumstance never wanting in diplomatic affairs, I wrote to the cardinal for leave to return, and used, among other friends, the kind offices of Pace [the cardinal's secretary]. On my way home, I met him unexpectedly at Gravelines, and in such a hurry that he could hardly stop to greet me.

"This office of ambassador never pleased me. Indeed, it is not likely to suit us laymen, however it may you ecclesiastics, who have no wives and children to leave at home behind you. We, when we have been ever so little a time absent, long to be home again on their account. When an ecclesiastic sets out, he and all belonging to him are maintained abroad at the expense of kings, so that he has no

establishment to keep up at home. But such is not the case with me; when absent, I have a double family to support, one at home and one abroad. The provision made by the king for those I took with me was liberal enough; but no account was taken of those I had to leave at home; and yet, you well know, I was not the man to allow of any stint during my absence: as a husband, a father, and a master, I hope I know my duty better. Lastly, princes have ways of requiting such as you without any cost to themselves; but with regard to us it is quite another matter; there is no such cheap way of compensating our services. True it is, however, that, on my return, a pension would have been settled on me by the king—an offer in point of honour and profit not to be slighted—but I have hitherto declined it, and think I shall continue so to do. The fact is, that if I accept it, my present situation in the city, which I prefer to a higher one, must either be relinquished, or, which I should be very much against, be held not without some dissatisfaction to our citizens. Thus it is: should any question arise between them and their prince as to privileges, as is sometimes the case, they could not help looking upon me as less true to their cause, if indebted to the king for my pension. As for the rest, there were some things occurred on this embassy which afforded me particular pleasure. In the first place, my long and constant intercourse with Tunstall, than whom no man is better versed in every elegant acquirement, no man more correct in his conduct, or agreeable in his conversation. And then I formed an acquaintance with Busleiden, whose handsome means enabled him to treat me not only courteously, but magnificently. The elegance of his house, his admirable domestic arrangements, the monuments of antiquity which he possesses, (and in which, you know, I take particular delight), and lastly, his exquisite library, and that fund of learning and eloquence which he possesses in

himself, completely astonished me. Nor in the whole of my peregrinations was any thing more agreeable to me, than the company of your good and valuable friend Ægidius, of Antwerp; a man so truly learned, modest, good-humoured, and friendly withal, that may I be hanged if I would not freely give half I am worth in the world to have the good fortune constantly to enjoy his society." The former of the persons here so warmly spoken of was Jerome Busleiden, an ecclesiastic of the Low Countries, who died soon after the period in question, and bequeathed his property to the University of Louvain, in order to establish professorships of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages; the latter is the person to whom More dedicated his celebrated *Utopia*, which was written at this period, during the leisure hours of his diplomatic avocations; for his mind was too expansive to be confined to the dull routine of professional duty. This work, the most popular of all More's productions, evinces great playfulness of fancy, joined to an originality of thinking, which was in advance of his age. It will demand a more detailed account in another place. (See *Volume of Selections*.)

That able minister and exemplary ecclesiastic, the good Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, had often solicited permission to retire from the chancery, in order to be able to devote his whole attention to the exercise of his episcopal functions. At length the king accepted his resignation, and tendered the seals to Wolsey. Stapleton has preserved a letter written to the prelate by More, on this occasion, and accompanied by a copy of the *Utopia*, which had just made its appearance. The letter is more particularly interesting as anticipating sentiments which were afterwards to be More's own, under the circumstances of a similar resignation. A translation of this letter, which is in Latin, is here offered to the reader.

Most Reverend Father:—I have ever reckoned

yours a happy lot—happy, while you discharged with so much honour to yourself and advantage to the nation, the office of chancellor; happier still when, having now resigned that office, you have sought repose, as a sanctuary in which you may live to God and to yourself—a repose, not only more agreeable than the employment you filled, but more dignified than all the honours you enjoyed: for many, and sometimes the worst of men, may be in office. You filled the highest in the state, one investing with ample authority him who executes, and rendering obnoxious to abundant calumny him who resigns it. To lay it down then, as you did, of your own accord—the permission for which cost you much trouble, none but a modest man would have wished, none but an innocent one have dared. There are not wanting men to appreciate your conduct, and to admire it as it deserves; and, at a moment like the present, I hope not to be found the last among the admirers of the step you have had the courage to take. Indeed, I know not which to applaud the most, your modesty in voluntarily relinquishing so high and splendid an office, your magnanimity in despising dignities which others so dearly prize, or the innocency of your administration in remaining fearless of consequences. Your conduct was certainly wise and praiseworthy; nor have I words to express the feeling with which I would congratulate the rare felicity that is yours, or to tell you, most Reverend Father, how sincerely I rejoice to see you aloof from secular employment and forensic tumult, enjoying the honourable glory and well-earned fame of an office nobly administered by you, and still more nobly resigned; and, conscious of a life well-spent, calmly devoting the evening of your days to letters and philosophy. I am led to reflect daily more and more upon the happiness of your lot, as contrasted with the misery of mine. For, though I have no occupations worth the naming, yet as trifles become things of magnitude to the little, I

am so busy, that I have no leisure to pay my respects to you in person, and scarcely time to apologize by letter for my omission. Thus I have barely time to write you this, for the purpose of recommending to your indulgence the inclosed ill-digested little work, which a too partial friend of mine in Antwerp, hasty and unpolished as the performance is, thought worthy of the press, and printed without my knowledge. Though fully aware how unworthy it is of your dignity, learning, and experience, yet, knowing your candour and indulgence to every endeavour of mine, which I have so often experienced, I have summoned up courage enough to send it to you : and should the writing be deemed of little worth, the writer is solicitous to find favour.

Most worthy prelate, fare you well.

As we are upon the subject of the good Warham, it should not be forgotten that Erasmus has paid a just and most eloquent tribute to his memory. He died in 1533, as a bishop should die — poor, though he had filled two of the highest and most wealthy dignities in the church and state. At his death he left no more than was sufficient to defray his debts and the expenses of his funeral. When near his end, he told his steward to bestow a certain sum in charity. “My lord,” said the steward, “there is but thirty pounds left us in the world.” “Well, well,” he cheerfully replied ; “*satis viatici ad cælum*—that is enough to last me out to heaven.” A short time before his death, says Wood, he announced to those around him, in something like a prophetic spirit, that “he should have for his successor, a Thomas [Cranmer], who would as much by his vicious living and wicked heresies, dishonour, waste, and destroy the see of Canterbury, and the whole church of England, as the former bishop and martyr of that name did before benefit, bless, adorn, and honour the same.”

When Wolsey, in his journey to France, commanded the superior clergy who attended him to

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appear only in silk, a rare article of luxury at that period, Warham alone had the spirit to disobey; he would use so rich an ornament only in the vestments employed in the church service. We learn this from Erasmus.

1516. The able manner in which our negotiator had managed the business entrusted to him, and which, as we learn from his own words, was an affair of no small importance, would not tend to diminish the anxiety of the king to engage him in a closer attendance upon his person. Henry loved wit and learning, and therefore could not be indifferent to the accomplishments of a man whose talents he had already put to the test. But he found it almost as difficult to win him over to his service now, as he afterwards did to bind him to his will in a matter of conscience. Indeed, there is no trait in the character of this extraordinary man more decidedly marked, than a degree of independence amounting to little less than obstinacy. Original in his views and habits, he disliked all influence and restraint, and mingled with the great without imbibing in the smallest degree the spirit of a courtier. These feelings are embodied in his *Utopia*, many passages of which might be adduced as intended in a pleasant, but not very courtier-like way, to insinuate his opinion of the service to which he was solicited to devote himself. The hero of the piece is made to say: "Now, I live after my own mind and pleasure, which I think very few of these great statesmen and peers of the realm can say.—In losing my own quiet, I should in no way further the common good: for, in the first place, *most princes have more delight in warlike matters and feats of chivalry, (the knowledge of which I neither possess, nor desire to possess,)* than in the good arts of peace: and employ more pains about enlarging their dominions, whether by good or evil means, than about ruling well and peaceably those they already possess.—Should I boldly rise up in the council, and declare

that the community ought to choose their king for their own sake, and not for his, to the intent that, through his labour and study, they might all live wealthy and happy, safe from wrong and injury: that, therefore, the king should take more care for the well-being of his people, than for his own; even as the duty and office of a shepherd is, in his very quality of shepherd, to feed his sheep rather than himself:—I say, were I to declare all this, should I not, think ye, have deaf hearers?"* Considering the bold views, religious and political, promulgated in this work, whether regarding them as More's own opinions, or as merely assumed by way of colouring to his romance, Henry must be allowed to have shown some liberality and fearlessness in his increased desire to retain him in his counsels, and draw him nearer to his person. Happily for the king, but unfortunately for More, an incident occurred which forced him into the distinction he had so studiously avoided. A valuable ship belonging to the Pope, coming into Southampton, had been seized as a prize by the English cruizers. The legate appealed to the king, that his Holiness might have counsel assigned him, learned in the laws of the land, to defend his cause; and, as his Majesty was himself a great civilian, it was requested that the cause might be tried publicly, and in his presence. More had the honour of being chosen as the ablest lawyer of his time, to be counsel for the Pope, and to report proceedings in Latin to the legate. A hearing of the cause was appointed before Wolsey, as Lord Chancellor; and the judges in the Star-chamber. Our advocate pleaded the cause with so much learning and success, that not only was the vessel restored to the Pope, but, to use the words of Roper, "himself, for his upright and commendable demeanour in the cause, was so greatly applauded by all the hearers, that, for no entreaty, would the king from henceforth be induced any longer to forbear his service."

* *Utopia*, Ralph Robinson's translation. (1590).

1517. There being at this time no better place vacant, Henry created More master of the requests, and a month after conferred on him the honour of knighthood, and made him a privy-councillor. Weston, treasurer of the exchequer, dying some time afterwards, the king, without any solicitation, gave that place also to the man whose good-will he was so anxious to conciliate. We are now, therefore, to behold SIR THOMAS MORE in a very different situation from that in which we have heretofore viewed him.

We find him taken from his practice as a lawyer, and from the condition of a private gentleman, to become an officer of state, and to be recognized as a favourite of the king—*taken* it may be truly said, for he certainly acted in the present instance, rather in obedience to the king than to gratify any passion of his own for power and grandeur. His simplicity of heart would naturally incline him to disrelish the courts of princes and their intrigues, and it is possible that he may have already surmised from Henry's character, the probable inconstancy of his favour. Under every advancement we shall find that he still preserved the plainness and integrity which distinguished him in private life. A superior station served but to call forth superior talents; and in the end it displayed his superiority of character under the severest of human trials.

But, previously to accompanying him to the new scene of his glory and of his trials, we may be permitted to cast "one lingering look behind" upon the busy school-room, and the other domestic economies of his residence in Chelsea: for they still look fresh in the descriptions left us by his contemporaries.

We have no hesitation in considering the five or six years that have just elapsed as the happiest period of More's life. While rising rapidly in his profession and filling an honourable and lucrative situation, he still found leisure for his literary pursuits, and produced works on which, independently of their value

in a moral point of view, has been conferred the distinctive honour of having advanced and polished his mother tongue. The warmth of his affections, the kindness of his heart, and the playfulness of his manner, continued to ensure the happiness of his home, even when his son with a wife, three daughters with their husbands, and a proportionable number of grandchildren, dwelt under his patriarchal roof.

It appears that, somewhere about this period, Sir Thomas was sent to investigate the cause of a great local inconvenience, the growth of the Goodwin Sands on the coast of Kent, and the consequent stoppage of Sandwich Haven. An amusing anecdote connected with this visit shall be given in the quaint but graphic language of old Latimer.

"Master More was once sent in commission into Kent, to help to pry out, if it might be, what was the cause of the Goodwin Sands, and the shelves that stopped up Sandwich Haven. Thither cometh Master More, and calleth the county about him, such as were thought to be men of experience, and men that could of likelihood best certify him of that matter, concerning the stopping of Sandwich Haven. Among others, came in before him, an old man with a white head, and one that was thought to be little less than an hundred years old. When Master More saw this aged man, he thought it expedient to hear him say his mind in this matter; for, being so old a man, it was likely that he knew most of any man, in that presence and company. So Master More called this aged man unto him, and said: 'Father,' quoth he, 'tell me, if ye can, what is the cause of this great arising here of the sands and shelves about this haven, the which stop it up, that no ships can arrive here? Ye are the oldest man that I can espy in all this company; so that if any man can tell the cause of it, ye of likelihood can say most of it; or at leastwise more than any man here assembled.' 'Yes, forsooth, good master,' quoth this old man, 'for I am

well nigh an hundred years old, and no man here in this company is any thing near unto my age. I have marked this matter as well as some others.' 'Well, then,' quoth Master More, 'how say you of this?' 'Forsooth, Sir,' quoth he, 'I am an old man; the oldest in all the company, and I wot how this haven waxed naught. For I knew it good; I knew it when it was a fair fish-pool.' 'Well, then, tell me,' continued Master More, 'what hath so hurt it, my good father?' 'Well,' said he, 'I remember the time right well, when great ships passed up yonder without difficulty, and now, marry! right small vessels have much work to come up at diverse tides.' 'Well,' still continued Master More, 'and what is the reason, father, that the haven is so decayed?' Then some of the old men present laid the fault to the Goodwin Sands. 'And what,' said the old father, starting up, 'what was the cause of the Goodwin Sands? I am an old man, and I can tell you. Tenderden Steeple is the cause of the Goodwin Sands.' 'How so, father?' cried Master More, and all present. 'Nay, by'r lady, masters,' quoth he, 'I cannot tell you why. But I remember when there was no steeple at all there; and before the steeple was built, there was no manner of speaking of any flats or sands that stopped up the haven; and I knew it a good haven till that steeple was built; and therefore Tenderden Steeple is the cause of the Goodwin Sands, and of the decaying of Sandwich Haven.'"

CHAPTER III.

1512—1517. *ÆTAT.* 36.

MORE IN THE BOSOM OF HIS FAMILY.

More's residence at Chelsea—The improvement made by him there—Domestic economy of his establishment—His charities—His devotional exercises—The education of his children—Letters to his daughters—His son John—His daughter Margaret—His correspondence abroad—Holbein's painting of More and his family—His family fool.

AFTER surveying men in their public stations, it is pleasing to contemplate them in the more private relations of life; to follow them to their closets, and into the bosom of their families; and to discover how those who influence the destinies of their fellow-men, conduct themselves amidst the cares and duties which are common to the humble and to the exalted. Several pictures are left us of More in the midst of his household, and rarely has a public character appeared there to greater advantage.

We have seen that More's professional practice, together with the legal appointments which he held in the city of London, produced him an income equivalent, according to Sir James Mackintosh, to about 5,000*l.* in the present day. This enabled him to purchase a mansion and grounds at Chelsea, in a pleasant situation, near the borders of the Thames, and at a convenient distance from the scene of his daily duties; "three small mites from London," as William Rastell, his nephew, and editor of his works, is careful to inform his readers.

Erasmus, who often shared the hospitality of this

mansion, describes it as "neither mean, nor calculated to raise envy, and yet magnificent enough."*

In some things he kept up a degree of style; thus we learn incidentally, that when he resigned the chancellorship, he gave to his successor, my Lord Audley, "his barge and *eight* watermen."

His hospitable door stood open to all. To him might have been applied what was said of another great and good man—"methinks I see you sitting at your gate, like one of the good patriarchs of old, inviting all the weary and the way-faring to come in and be refreshed." He added to the conveniences of his house, by building at the end of his garden, a chapel, a library, and a gallery, known at the time as the New Building, where he passed in study and devotion whatever time he could steal from his public and private duties, and "where he would as much as possible, sequester himself from the world, and shake off the dust of earthly business, which so easily defiles the soul."

He also built a chapel, or chancel, in Chelsea Church,† and furnished it with a handsome service of altar plate, observing in that half-jocose, half-prophetic manner of his—"Good men give these things, and bad men take them away." He also provided a house at no great distance from his own, for the reception of the aged and decayed persons of his parish, to whose maintenance he consecrated a portion of his income, delegating to his favourite daughter, Margaret, the office of seeing their comforts attended to.

* The old mansion stood at the north end of Beaufort Row, extending westward at the distance of about one hundred yards from the water side. Dr. King, Rector of Chelsea, writing in the year 1717, says, that no less than four houses have contended for the honour of Sir Thomas's residence.

† It is the south chancel, in which still remains in a perfect state the monumental inscription which he composed for himself, and in the east window were his arms, in painted glass. These unfortunately disappeared some seventy or eighty years ago, when the church was repaired. The taste of a Milner or a Britton was wanting to ensure their preservation.

"There was nothing in the world," says Rastell, "that pleased and comforted him so much as when he could do some good deed or other to his neighbour, either by relieving him by his counsel, his good word, or by his money. Never was there any man that sought relief and help at his hands, that went not away cheerful and satisfied; and his great delight was to pacify those that were in debate, and to reconcile those at variance." He would ramble about the obscure lanes and bye-places, giving an alms liberally according to the person's necessity.

"If a man," he would say, "knew for a certainty that he was to be banished into a strange country, never to return to his own again, and yet were to refuse to have his goods transported thither, fearful of wanting them for the few days he had to stay, should we not account him a madman? And yet equally are they out of their wits, who hold on to their purse, and refuse an alms for fear of wanting during their short sojournment here. Send your goods on before you to heaven, where you shall shortly be, and shall enjoy them with interest." He would also frequently invite his poor neighbours to his table, and there would be merry and pleasant with them.

More's house was the constant resort of the most accomplished men of his time. His friendships were many and faithful. "By no one," says Erasmus, "are friendships more readily formed, more diligently cultivated, more steadfastly retained. If he discovers any one with whom he has formed an intimacy, to be irreclaimably vicious, he gradually discontinues the intimacy; but never breaks it off in an abrupt or mortifying manner. An utter enemy to all gaming, and to all those unmeaning amusements by which the idlers of society endeavour to escape from the insupportable languor of existence, his leisure hours are spent in the conversation of a circle, throughout which his own politeness, ease,

and vivacity, diffuse universal good humour and gaiety. To sum up his character in one word—if the pattern of a perfect friend be required, let it be sought in More."

The domestic virtues and the family circle of his illustrious friend, are subjects on which Erasmus evidently dwells with delight; it calls forth from his pen that eloquence which flows warm and spontaneous from the heart. "With what gentleness," he exclaims, "does my friend regulate his household, where misunderstandings and quarrels are altogether unknown. Corporal chastisement of his servants was never resorted to under his roof, nor did he use to them words of contumely or reproach. If there was occasion for chiding them, it was in so mild and conciliatory a manner, that his very chiding made him the more beloved.

"Indeed, More is looked up to as a general composer of differences, and was never known to part with any one on terms of unkindness. His house is destined to enjoy the peculiar felicity, that all who dwell under its roof, go forth into the world bettered in their morals, as well as improved in their condition: no spot was ever known to fall on the good name of its happy inhabitants. Here you might imagine yourself in the academy of Plato. But I should do injustice to his house by comparing it to the school of that philosopher, where nothing but abstract questions and sometimes moral virtues were the subjects of discussion: it would be more just to call it a school of religion, and a palestra for the exercise of the Christian virtues. All its inmates, male or female, apply their leisure to liberal studies and profitable reading, although piety is their first care. No wrangling, no angry word, is heard within its walls. No one is idle; every one does his duty with alacrity, and regularity and good order are prescribed by the mere force of kindness and courtesy. Every one performs his allotted task, and yet

all are as cheerful, as if mirth were their only employment:—surely such a house is entitled to be called a practical school of the Christian religion.”*

With respect to More himself, such was the sweetness of his temper, that his son-in-law, Roper, who lived in his house for sixteen years, and, to use his own words, “knew his doings and mind, no man living so well,” assures us that never, during all that time, did he see his countenance clouded, or hear his voice raised in anger. Margaret Giggs, his protégé, was heard to declare, that she would sometimes commit, or pretend to commit a fault, for the purpose of hearing him chide her, he did it in so soft and affectionate a manner. Any trifling disagreement that happened to arise in the family, principally from Mrs. More’s quickness of temper, was speedily adjusted in his pleasant and good-humoured way. In this manner, even her less tractable disposition was so far won upon, that she performed her part towards his children in a way to gain both their love and respect. The best proof of this is, their remaining after their marriage so many years under their father’s roof. It is also recorded, that so thoroughly did the taste for learning and liberal accomplishments pervade More’s whole establishment, that, if even a servant discovered an ear for music, or a talent for any particular art or accomplishment, it was sure to be encouraged. By this means, the large train of followers which every man of consequence was obliged, in those days, to retain in his service, was kept in a state of regular discipline, and of moral and mental

* In giving the above quotation, Sir James Mackintosh indulges in the following reflections: “Erasmus had not the sensibility of his friend: he was more prone to smile than to sigh at the concerns of men; but he was touched by the remembrance of these domestic solemnities in the household of his friend. He manifests an agreeable emotion at the recollection of these scenes in daily life, which tended to hallow the natural authority of parents; to bestow a sort of dignity on humble occupations; to raise menial offices to the rank of virtues; to spread peace and cultivate kindness among those who had shared, and were soon again to share, the same modest rites, in gently breathing around them a spirit of meek equality, which rather humbled the pride of the great, than disquieted the spirits of the lowly.”

improvement, almost unknown in the country. The provisions for maintaining this order, and keeping his household pure from corrupt communications were admirable. In his ample establishment at Chelsea, we find that there was a library, well furnished for the period, a room stored with objects of natural history, and instruments for the study of astronomy, and particularly of music, of which rational amusement he was extremely fond. Added to this, he had an extensive garden well laid out for pleasure and utility; and as a preventive of idleness, and to afford his servants a little resource of their own, he allotted to every man his plot of ground, which he was to cultivate and make the best of.

When people would come to him with tales of things done or spoken against themselves or him, he would always make the best of the matter he could: and when the *thing* could not be defended, he would excuse it on the ground of the *intention*.

Another regulation was admirable, and from which a useful hint might be taken in our own days. During meals, in order to prevent that sort of trifling or improper conversation before children and servants, against which there is always reason to guard, he ordered such books to be read aloud as might prove instructive, and afterwards furnish matter for entertaining and rational conversation.* When the reading

* Thus in his Utopia:—"They begin every dinner and supper by reading something that pertaineth to good manners and virtue, but it is short, that no man may be wearied by it; and thereupon the elders take occasion for honest discourse, but neither tedious nor unpleasant. —They also gladly hear the young men venture their opinions, and purposely provoke them to talk, that they may have a proof of every man's wit and understanding."

Inscription for a Refectory.

Νοῦν ἄρον ὁσπῆσαι.

PLATO.

Look first to the mind.

The Mind be thy first anxious care;
Next let the Body claim its share.

was ended, he would ask some one how he understood such and such a passage ; this at once excited them to exert their attention, and led to friendly communications, generally seasoned with some jest or other. Many of his pleasant sayings are written, but who, says Cresacre, "could record the witty things and mirthful phrases which daily fell from him in his peculiar discourse?"

If he heard any one at his table beginning to detract his neighbour, he would break off the conversation in some such way as this—"You say you don't like the fashion of my dining-room! well now, by your leave, sir, I think it well contrived, and fairly built enough."

It is remarked of him, that though singularly inattentive to his own person and individual concerns, he was ever solicitous about those of others, and ever ready with a well-timed hint, and a piece of useful advice thrown in, as it were, accidentally.*

Nor while attending to the moral wants of his household, was More inattentive to a still loftier and more important object—their duty to their Maker. It was his custom to rise very early himself, and to require his household to be up by times: he would then call them together to prayers, which he himself recited, together with certain Psalms which he had selected and caused to be transcribed neatly in a volume. During the Holy week, he would have the passion from one of the Evangelists read each day, in presence of all his family, and he would here and there explain the text in the way of comment and exhortation.

"Sleep is so like death," says a father of the church, "that I dare not venture on it without prayer." Impressed with this truth, More repaired with his whole household to the chapel at a fixed hour every evening, and himself said the prayers in which they all joined.

* Good words that come of course, far less do please,
Than those that fall by sweet contingencies.

Herrick (1640).

He never entered upon any business of importance, says Roper, as for instance, when he was first chosen to the privy-council, when he was sent ambassador, appointed Speaker of the house, or called to be Lord Chancellor, without first preparing himself by confession, and receiving the blessed sacrament devoutly, "trusting more to the grace of God derived through these holy sacraments, than he did to his own wit, judgment, and experience."

Roper adds, that being on one occasion sent for by the king upon urgent business, while he was hearing mass, More refused to stir till it was over. He was heard to say, as he left the chapel; "Let us first serve God: the king's turn will come soon enough after." It is satisfactory to learn, that Henry had the merit to be pleased with the piety and independence of his minister.

Another thing worth noticing is the reverence he bore to holy and sanctified places; so solemn was this feeling that nothing could induce him to converse on any temporal matter there, of however great weight and despatch it might be.

We also learn that "he would often go on pilgrimages to holy places, but always on foot; a rare thing at that time, for even the common people go on horseback. Also in the procession on the Rogation week, he would be present; and once when, according to custom, the procession was to go to the confines of the parish, he was requested, for his state and dignity, to ride. His answer was: "God forbid I should follow my Master on horseback, when he went on foot!"

"And the more to do honour to God's service," says Roper, "he would, even when he was Lord Chancellor, sit and sing in the choir with a surplice on. It once happened, that the Duke of Norfolk, coming on a holiday to dine with him at Chelsea, found him engaged in this way. After service, in going home with him arm in arm, he exclaimed,

"Good God, my Lord Chancellor, what! turned parish clerk, parish clerk? eh! why you dishonour the king and his office." "Nay, nay," quoth Sir Thomas, smiling upon the duke, "the king, your master and mine, will not surely be offended for my thus serving his Master and mine! There can be no dishonour to his office in that." And he then reminded him of the story of King Robert of France.*

"So much," says the author of the anonymous life, "did he love the bounty and glory of the house of God, that whenever he saw a man of comely person and good presence, he would say: 'It is a pity yonder man were not a priest, he would become the altar so well.'"

Nor was he less solicitous for the spiritual welfare of his children, of which the following, as related by his grandson, will serve among other examples. When William Roper was a young man, he addicted himself to more austerity than discretion warranted; the consequence was, as unfortunately sometimes happens in such cases, that when this ardour had worn itself out, and was succeeded by a stage of languor, he grew weary of the church fasts and religious discipline. This, too, was the age of new opinions, and of doctrines more soothing to the depravity of our nature. The smooth and easy way to heaven promised to their followers by the promulgators of the "new learning," as they affected to call it, was specious and flattering.

* It is thus told in the "Mirror of our Lady," which had been recently published. (1533). "King Robert of France was so devout towards God's service, that he would be in each feast at the Divine service in some monastery. And not only would he sing among the monks, but also he would put on a cope, and stand and sing as a chanter in the midst of the choir. It happened on a time when he was besieging a castle that had rebelled against him, that he was at Orleans on the feast of St. Angan. So he left his horse at the siege and went thither, and took a cope, and sung in the midst of the choir, as he was wont to do. And when he came to the *Agnus Dei*, and had begun it the third time with a high voice, kneeling down at each time on his knees, the walls of the castle that was besieged fell suddenly to the ground, and so the castle was destroyed and the enemy overcome. And thus ye may see, that there is no better armour of defence against all enemies, than devout attention to the Lord's service."

He began to read the books which issued in numbers from the presses in Holland, and were industriously disseminated through the land by the partisans of the refugees there. The new spirit was infectious, nor was he long in imbibing its influence. And with it entered "another spirit worse than the first," the zeal for proselytism. "He grew vehement," says Cresacre, "in his new opinions, and zealous in breaking them to others; so that he would be always saying, 'What a ready way to heaven was now found out, so that nobody need to sue saints' or men's prayers; but that God's ear was open to hear, and his mercy ready to forgive any sinner whatever who should call on him by faith. That faith alone was necessary to salvation, and having that only, he need not to doubt that he was an elect and saved soul, so that it was impossible for him to sin or fall away from God's favour.' So deeply had he drank of this dangerous poison, that he came on a time to Sir Thomas to request him, that as he was high in the king's favour, he would get him a license to preach what the Spirit had taught him; for he was assured that God had sent him to instruct the world; not knowing, God wot! any reason for this misson of his, but only his private spirit."* Sir Thomas, with a smile, and a "look more in pity than in anger," thus addressed him; "Is it not sufficient, my good son Roper, that we, who are your friends should know that you are a fool, but that you would have your folly proclaimed to the world?" After this, he often disputed with him on the subject of religion, but apparently without effect. At length he saw with pain that the new light had so dazzled his eyes, that he could not look on sound argument, but seemed daily to grow more captious, and more obstinately wedded to his opinions, and feeling, to use the lan-

* Rastell thus expresses it: "He had an itching publicly to preach, thinking that he should be better able to edify the people, than the best doctor that comes to St. Paul's-cross."

guage of an early writer, that "there are sturdy doubts and boisterous objections, that are to be conquered, not in a martial posture, but on our knees." More said to him, in an earnest tone, "In sober sadness, I see, son Roper, that disputation will do thee no good. From henceforth I have done; I will dispute with thee no more; but this will I do, —I will pray for thee, and who knows but God may be favourable to thee, and touch thy heart?" Sir Thomas shortly after meeting with Mrs. Roper, said to her rather sadly, "Meg, I have borne a long time with thy husband; I have reasoned and argued with him, and given him my poor fatherly counsel; but I perceive nothing of all this can call him home again. And, therefore, Meg, as I have told him himself, I will no longer dispute with him; but yet will I not give him over; no, I will go another way to work; I will get me to God, and pray for him." And so committing him to heaven, he parted from him, but ceased not earnestly to pour out his devotions before the throne of the Divine Mercy to that intent. "And behold," continues Cresacre, "my uncle not long after, being inspired with the light of grace, began to detest his heresies, and, like another St. Austin, wrought upon by the prayers of a Monica, was entirely converted; so that, ever after, he was not only a perfect Catholic, but lived and died a stout and valiant champion of the faith. His alms, and the sums he devoted to charitable uses, were so great, as to appear to exceed his annual income. In his latter years, he enjoyed an office of great gain, so that he was enabled to bestow in charitable purposes upwards of five hundred pounds a year." A less believing age will smile at the remainder of the history. "After my uncle's death," adds this confiding nephew, "I have heard it reported by them that were servants in his house, that during the three or four days that his body lay unburied, there was heard once a day, for

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the space of a quarter of an hour, the sweetest music that could be imagined ; not of any voices of men, but an angelic harmony, as a token how gracious that soul was to Almighty God."

In educating his children, More seems to have combined the most winning manner of imparting instruction, with very high ideas of the value of learning. In nothing is he more remarkable, than in his eagerness to render his daughters, in particular, rich in mental resources, and fit companions for men of eminence in literature and talent. His view of the advantages of study, as respects the formation of the female character, affords a more decisive proof of his elevation above the notions of his time, than any other fact. The fashions of the court, one of the gayest ever known, were most unfavourable to the cultivation of solid learning in the softer sex : and More, perhaps, had the singular merit of first making a stand against the influence of example, and of rendering the women of his family learned, studious, and sedate. Certain it is, that from this period a higher idea of the capacities of the female character seems to have been introduced into England. The princesses Mary and Elizabeth were carefully educated. Both of them read the Greek poets and the most difficult Latin authors, besides speaking and writing the latter language with fluency. Two other ladies of the same age, Ann Askew and the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey, are also cited as still more eminently accomplished. In some instances, these studies were even extended to an acquaintance with the writings of the Greek and Latin fathers. At all events, it was a great step, at such a period, to make the admission, that woman was worthy of being raised above the mere plaything or domestic drudge.

A most delightful account of SIR THOMAS MORE'S SCHOOL, as his domestic academy was commonly called, has been given us in the letters of his learned

and faithful friend, Erasmus;* and we have yet more valuable testimony in the letters of More himself to his children and their preceptors, at such times as he was absent from them. The school consisted of his own five children, a step-daughter by his second wife, afterwards Mrs. Alice Alingham, an orphan girl, subsequently married to his friend Dr. Clement, whom he generously educated with his daughters, and who appears to have partaken equally with them of his love and care. Afterwards, when his sons and daughters married, More seeing that a family so attached could not endure the idea of separation, contrived to accommodate them all in his house at Chelsea, as well as, in the sequel, eleven grandchildren, who were the fruit of these marriages.

Two or three of his letters to his children, during his temporary absence on his duties at court, have fortunately been preserved, and will prove a treat to all who esteem and admire More in the character of a good father, as well as that of a great statesman.

"Thomas More to his whole school sendeth greeting :—You see how I have found out a compendious way of saluting you all, and making spare of time and paper, which I must needs have wasted in saluting every one of you by name; which would have been very superfluous, because you are all so dear to me, some in one respect, some in another, that I can leave no one among you unsaluted. Yet there is no better motive why I should love you, than because you are scholars; learning seeming to bind me more strictly to you than nearness of blood. I am glad, therefore, that Mr. Drue is returned safe, for whom you know I was anxious. Did I not love you exceedingly, I should envy you the rare happiness of having so many great scholars for your masters. I learn that Mr. Nicholas is also with you, and that you have learned of him much astronomy; I hear you

* It will give us no mean idea of the estimation in which Erasmus held this domestic academy, when we find him dedicating some of his Commentaries "To Sir Thomas More's School."

have proceeded with him so far in this science, that you now know not only the pole star, the dog, and such common constellations, but also, which argues you to be absolute and cunning astronomers, to be able to discern the sun from the moon!* Go forward, then, with this your new and admirable skill, by which you thus climb up to the stars, and while you daily consider them with your eyes, let your minds also be in heaven, and more especially in this holy season of Lent. Let that excellent and pious song of Boethius sound in your ears, whereby you are taught also with your minds to penetrate heaven, lest when the eye is lifted to the skies, the soul should grovel among the brute beasts.† My dearest children, farewell. From the Court this 23d March, 1516."

Another. "*Thomas More to his best and beloved children, and to Margaret Giggs, whom he numbereth among his own, sendeth greeting :—*

"The merchant of Bristol brought me your letters,

* More cannot resist the temptation of a dash of waggery, even in writing to his school. On another occasion, he exhorts them to get ideas of their own, and not be content "to deck themselves with plumes of other birds, lest the jackdaws should gather round them, and pluck their tails for very shame."

† The following is a feeble imitation of the vigorous verses of Boethius to which More refers :—

How fallen our nature, we may see,
Ah, wretched man! the proof in thee.
Ere sin its energies confin'd,
How firm and vigorous was thy mind,
Still ranging, with unwearied view,
Creation's ample circuit through;
The sun, unfailing fount of day,
You trac'd through all his radiant way;
The moon array'd in borrow'd light,
And every star that gilds the night;
The planets, too, that wandering go,
And seem no settled course to know,
Through all their mazes you pursued,
Pleas'd to confess that "all was good."
But now, sad change! that soaring mind
Is fall'n, unnerv'd, disorder'd, blind;
Of earth-born cares the wretched prey;
For all the man is sunk away.
And, sad reverse! now fix'd those eyes
To earth, that erst could scan the skies.

W

the next day after he had received them of you ; with the which I was exceedingly delighted : for there can come nothing, yea though never so rude, and never so meanly polished from this workshop of yours, but it procureth me more delight than other men's doings, be they ever so eloquent ; so much does your writing stir up my affection towards you.

“ But exclusive of this, your letters may also very well please me for their own worth, being full of fine wit, and of pure Latin phrase. There were none of them all but pleased me exceedingly ; yet to tell you ingenuously what I think, my son John's letter pleaseth me best, both because it was longer than the others, as also that he seems to me to have taken more pains than the rest : for he not only pointeth out the matter becomingly, and speaketh elegantly, but he playeth also pleasantly with me, and returneth my jests upon me again very wittily ; and this he doth, not only pleasantly, but temperately withal, showing that he is mindful with whom he jesteth, to wit, his father, whom he endeavoureth so to delight, that he is also afraid to offend. Hereafter, I expect every day letters from each one of you ; neither will I accept of such excuses as you complain of, that you had no leisure, or that the carrier went away suddenly, or that you have no matter to write. John is not wont to allege any such things, and nothing can hinder you from writing, but many things encourage you thereto. Why should you lay any fault upon the carrier, seeing you may prevent his coming, and have them ready made up and sealed, two days before any offer themselves to carry them : and how can you want matter of writing unto me, who am delighted to hear either of your studies or of your play ? whom you may then please exceedingly, when having nothing to write of, you write as largely as you can of that nothing, than which nothing is more easy for you to do, especially being women, and therefore prattlers by nature, and amongst whom daily a great

story riseth of nothing. This, however, I admonish you to do, that whether you write of serious matters, or of trifles, you write with diligence and attention, premeditating it before. Neither will it be amiss, if you first indite it in English, for then it may be more easily translated into Latin, while the mind, freed from inventing, is attentive to find apt and eloquent words. And though I point this to your choice, whether you will do so or not, yet I enjoin you by all means that you diligently examine what you have written, before you write it out fair again; first considering attentively the whole sentence, and after examining every part thereof, by which means you may easily find if any solecisms have escaped you; which being corrected, and your letter written fair, do not find it irksome to examine it over again; for sometimes the same faults will creep in at the second writing, that you had before blotted out. By this diligence of yours, your very trifles will become serious matters; for as nothing is so pleasing but may be spoiled by prating garrulity, so nothing is by nature so unpleasant, as may not by industry be made full of grace and pleasantness. Farewell, my sweetest children. From the Court this 3d of September, 1516."

Another. "*Thomas More to his dearest daughters Margaret, Elizabeth, and Cecily, and to Margaret Giggs, as dear to him as if she were his own, sendeth greeting:—*

"I cannot sufficiently express, my best beloved wenches, how exceedingly your elegant letters have pleased me. Nor am I the less delighted to hear, that in all your journeying, though you change places often, you omit none of your accustomed exercises, either in making declamations, composing of verses, or in your logical exercises. By this I persuade myself that you dearly love me, because you are so very careful to please me by your diligence in my absence, to perform those things which you know are

so grateful to me when present. And as I find this your mind and affection so much to delight me, so will I procure that my return shall be profitable to you all. And persuade yourselves, that there is nothing in the midst of these my troublesome cares and fatigues of business, that recreateth me so much as when I read some of your labours, by which I find those things to be true which your loving master writes so affectionately of you ; for had not your own letters evidently shown me how earnest your desire is towards learning, I should have judged that he had rather written out of affection than according to the truth ; but what you write makes him be believed, and myself to imagine those things to be true of your witty and acute disputations, of which he so much boasts as almost to exceed belief. I am, therefore, marvellously desirous to return home, that I may hear you, and set my scholar to dispute with you, who is slow to believe yet out of all hope or conceit to find you able to correspond to the praises given you by your master. But I hope, knowing how steady you are in your pursuits, that you will shortly surpass your master, if not in disputing, at least, like every woman, in not giving up the point in dispute. My dear wenches, farewell."

Roper says that he would sometimes come into their study-room in the midst of their exercises, and exhort them to diligence ; "My children," would he say, "remember that virtue and learning are the meat, and play but the sauce."

In More's folio there is an admirable letter from Sir Thomas to William Gunnell, one of the preceptors to his children, containing his views on education in general, and enforcing some particular precepts adapted to the disposition of his own children.*

While Erasmus admired the proficiency of the young ladies, and shared in the pleasure it diffused,

* For a copy of this valuable relic, see our volume of SELECTIONS.

he could not help remarking one day to his friend, how severe a calamity it would be, if, by any of those fatalities to which man is liable, such accomplished beings, whom he had so painfully and so successfully laboured to improve, should happen to be snatched away! "If they are to die," replied More, without hesitation, "I would rather have them die well-informed than ignorant." "This reply," continues Erasmus, "reminded me of a saying of Phocion, whose wife, as he was about to drink the poison, according to his sentence, exclaimed: "Ah! my husband, you die innocent!" "And would you, my wife," he rejoined, "rather have me die guilty?"

It is said that Sir Thomas's first wife, having had three daughters, put up many earnest vows for a son. Her prayer was heard, and the knight used to say, "That she had prayed so long for a boy, that she brought forth one at last that would be a boy as long as he lived." This expression, by which probably nothing more was intended than an allusion to the levity of the youth's temper, has been too literally interpreted by Mr. Cayley and others to signify a weakness of intellect, and poor John has been unceremoniously classed among the *heroum filii*.*

In the splendid collection of portraits from original drawings by Holbein, in the King of England's collection, published by Mr. Chamberlaine, is a beautiful engraving of More's son. The editor observes, that the received opinion of this youth's mental weakness is contradicted by this very intellectual head, and by the attitude in which the faithful artist has painted him—with a book in his hand, in the attitude of deep study. He justly observes, that due allowance must be made for More's antithetical phrase; and that, if the father could not

* Buffon, the celebrated naturalist, had but a single son, who, in point of intelligence, proved the very converse of his father. Rivarol, the wit of that day, observed—"That he was the very worst chapter in all his father's Natural History."

withhold his joke, it should not be construed to the prejudice of the son. Besides, we have the evidence of Erasmus to oppose to this, who, in one of his letters, describes him as "a youth of the best hopes." He has, also, a letter addressed to him, full of expressions of respect and esteem; and, in 1531, he dedicated to him a translation of Aristotle, as did Grynœus that of Plato, some years later.

He was married to the sole heiress of an ancient and respectable family of Barnborough, in Yorkshire. The Rev. Joseph Hunter has satisfactorily proved, that the Life of Sir Thomas More, usually known under the name of his great grandson, Thomas More, is the work of John Cresacre More, second son of the above. His youngest daughter, Gertrude, also composed a work entitled "Spiritual Exercises," which is favourably spoken of. It was printed in Paris, 1658, with a portrait of the authoress, and is a work of great rarity.

The following is a little specimen of badinage, in an epistle addressed by More to his Margaret only.

"My dearest Margaret:—You ask for money of your father without the slightest fear or shame, and what is worse, the letter in which you ask it is of such a kind, that I cannot refuse your request, do what I will. Indeed, I could find in my heart to recompense your letter, not as Alexander did by Choritus, giving him for every line a Phillipine of gold; but, if my pocket were as large as my will, I would bestow two crowns of the purest gold for every syllable of the same. Herein, I send you as much as you requested; I should have been willing to send you more, but I like to have my penny-worth for my penny. As I bestow with pleasure, so am I desirous to be asked, and to be fawned on by my daughters; and more especially by you, Meg, whom virtue and learning have made so dear to me. Therefore, the sooner you have spent this money well, as you are ever wont to do, and the sooner you ask for more in

as handsome a way as you did for the last, know, that the sooner you will do your father a singular pleasure. My beloved daughter, farewell."

Several letters from More to this his favourite daughter, will be found among our *Selections*. In perusing them, the reader will be struck by the importance attached by More to her learning. The encomiums bestowed on her progress are such as no common acquirements could deserve; and yet their novelty may have been a strong temptation in those days to overrate them. The taste of the times seems to have inclined much to light reading, if to any at all; the press of Caxton had, in the two preceding reigns, furnished the nation with a tolerable store of romance-reading, and with some translations from the Italian. The works of Chaucer had also been rendered more accessible, and we find Margaret quoting him in her letters. On this love of romance-reading, More's opponent, Tindall, has the following reflections: "That this forbidding the laity to read the Scriptures, is not for the love of your souls is evident, inasmuch as they permit you to read Robin Hood, Bevy's of Hampton, Hercules, Hector, and Troilus, with a thousand histories and fables of love, and wantonness, and ribaldry, to corrupt the minds of youth!" From the absence of all allusion to these popular books in More's letters and other writings, it is, perhaps, not unfair to infer, that, independently of his own early-acquired taste for these studies, one of his reasons for insisting so much on the study of the learned languages, was that they might serve as a substitute for this species of literature. In a letter to Gunnel, one of the preceptors to his family, he offers some excellent practical reflections, worthy the attention of every father of a family. It will be found in our volume of *Selections*, together with all the letters that passed between More and his family, which are too precious to be omitted.

In More's volume of Latin poems there is also an

epistle in verse addressed by him to his children, probably in one of his journeys to the court at Woodstock. As it has never been alluded to by any of More's biographers, I shall present the reader with a copy, accompanied by an attempt at translation. (See the *Selections*.)

Such was More's establishment at Chelsea. In hours of subsequent trial, and amidst the bitterness of separation, which must have fallen with tenfold weight on a family who had never quitted their patriarchal roof, Margaret found a melancholy pleasure in recurring to the happier hours spent in this family circle: "What," she afterwards wrote, "do you think, my most dear father, doth comfort us at Chelsea in your absence? surely the remembrance of your manner of life passed here amongst us, your holy conversation, your wholesome counsels, your examples of virtue." Who can suspect an eulogy like this?

More maintained an active correspondence with several friends on the Continent, in the Latin language, which was then the exclusive medium of communication. But with no one did he correspond more regularly, and unobscure his mind more freely, than to Erasmus; and this scholar's letters in reply are filled with epithets indicative of the overflowing of a heart fully impressed with the benignity and kindness of the man he is addressing—"Suavissime Moro"—"Charissime Moro"—"Mellitissime Moro."

On his friend's return to the Continent, More received, as a present from him, his portrait, painted by the celebrated Holbein, which was sent by the painter's own hand, accompanied by a letter of introduction. More took the first opportunity of making the king acquainted with the painter's merits, and he did it in his usual odd way of contriving things. He caused Holbein to bring the choicest of his works, and dispose them in his great hall to the best ad-

vantage, and in order to take the king by surprise, he invited him to an entertainment. The plan succeeded; Henry, struck with the beauty of the pictures, eagerly inquired if the artist were still living, and, if so, whether his services were to be obtained for love or money. Holbein was within hearing, and was led by the hand to the royal presence. The consequence was not only the patronage of the king, but the fullest employment from all the nobility and men of wealth and eminence, as the various galleries in England still testify. Among other works, he signalized his skill in a painting of More and his family, a copy of which Sir Thomas sent to Erasmus, in return for the compliment he had paid him. In a letter to Margaret Roper, this great scholar acknowledges in the most enthusiastic terms the reception of this picture.

"I want words," says he, "to express to you my delight on contemplating the picture of your family which Holbein has so happily executed. If I were present with the originals, I could not have a more accurate idea of them. I see you all before me, but no one more strikingly than yourself, in whose features shine those mental accomplishments, those domestic virtues, which have rendered you the ornament of your country and of your age!"

As this picture is considered to be a faithful representation of a domestic scene in More's family, the reader will not be displeased to have a more particular description of it. It is divided into two groups. In the foreground of the first are More's two daughters, Margaret and Cecily, kneeling, with their mother-in-law, Alice, in the same position. In the centre of the second group sit More and his father. John More, the son, and Harris, his favourite servant, are standing the last in the group. Behind More and his father stands Ann Cresacre, in her 15th year, to whom young More is supposed to be newly espoused. Elizabeth, More's second daughter, and Margaret Giggs,

pointing to an open book, stand foremost in the second group. A violin hung against the wainscot, near Sir Thomas, would seem to indicate his taste for music.

This painting is still preserved with religious care at Nostel Priory, in Yorkshire, the seat of Charles Winn, Esq., who is in direct descent from Cresacre More. The Reverend Frognall Dibdin, in his amusing *Northern Tour*, (1838,) thus speaks of this ancient mansion and painting. "Nostel Priory is a large and noble stone mansion, with a grand flight of steps. We entered the lower apartments. Two large wooden seats or sofas, of the age of Elizabeth or James, showed the owner to have an eye of taste in matters of ancient furniture. Mr. Winn made his appearance, and in a trice I was introduced to my dear old acquaintance, Sir Thomas More. I might be said, for a little moment, to have silently worshipped the picture. Its entirety and freshness surpassed all expectation. The owner seemed to be secretly enjoying my abstraction. He well might; for a more surprising and interesting production I had never before gazed upon. England has nothing more precious than this picture, as she has no character more perfect than ~~he~~ who occupies the principal place in it. I wondered as I beheld; and even yet, after all the pictorial glories seen by me at Hamilton Palace, I revert in fancy to this picture, as the most valuable of its kind in the kingdom. What characters, what anecdotes belong to this matchless performance. Five thousand guineas have, I understand, been refused for it."

The copy which More sent to Erasmus, is in the Town-hall at Basle, where it is preserved with great care.

It will not surprise the reader, who is acquainted with the usages of those times, to find in Sir Thomas's establishment, a person who was called The Fool. King Henry kept such a personage about him to

amuse his leisure, who ranks as no unimportant personage in the gossiping history of that period. Will Somers figured on many a memorable occasion, and in Ellis's "Letters" may be seen a portrait of him in the same painting with his royal master. It was not even thought to detract from the gravity of a prelate of the church to keep such a character about him; and the following anecdote of Wolsey in his disgrace, will show what importance he attached to his Fool, who in the midst of his destitution and distress, was still found attending upon his person, and exhibiting proofs of attachment that might have shamed the

Minions of splendour shrinking from distress.

After rendering up all his immense wealth and estates to the king, Wolsey quitted London for his country house at Esher. As he rode along in deep dejection, a horseman was seen galloping after his party, who proved to be Sir John Norris, one of the king's chamberlains. On coming up, the knight presented him with a ring, which he declared the king had taken from his own finger, bidding him deliver it to his Grace, as a token that he should be of good cheer, for that he was even now as much as ever in his Majesty's favour. This sudden news entirely overcame the Cardinal, and leaping from his mule with almost youthful speed, he fell upon his knees, pulled off his cap, and returned thanks to Heaven for such joyful intelligence. When Sir John was about to take leave, he again thanked him, declaring, that if he were lord of a kingdom, the half of it could scarce be reward enough for his happy tidings. "But good Master Norris," added he, "consider that I have nothing left but the clothes on my back; therefore I entreat thee accept this small reward at my hands," presenting him with a gold chain, at which hung a cross of the same metal, containing a piece of the Holy Cross. "As for my sovereign,"

he continued, "I love him better than myself, and have faithfully served him according to the best of my poor wits; and now, sorry I am that I have no worthy token to send him; but stay, here is Patch, my Fool, that rides beside me; I beseech thee, take him to court, and give him to his majesty—I assure you, for any nobleman's pleasure, he's worth a thousand pounds."* The fool, however, of whom this was spoken, was seized with a paroxysm of affection on being ordered to leave his old master, and loudly declared that he would not stir from the spot; but he was conveyed away by six stout yeomen, and delivered to the king, who received him gladly.

The name of More's fool was Harry Patterson, and he seems to have been a simple-hearted inoffensive creature. Margaret Roper relates of him, that, meeting her one day, he asked where Sir Thomas was, and hearing he was still in the Tower, on account of his refusal to take the oath, he waxed even angry with his master, and said: "Why? what aileth him that he will not swear? Wherefore should *he* stick to swear—I have sworn the oath myself!"

Sometimes these characters were permitted to indulge in liberties, which another state of society would consider insupportable. Witness the following instance:—

King Henry dined at Windsor, at Cardinal Wolsey's, in the chapel-yard, at the time when he was building that admirable work, his tomb. At the gate stood a number of poor people, to be served with alms, when dinner was done; and, as Will Somers, the Jester, passed by, they saluted him, taking him for a worthy personage, which pleased him. In he comes; and finding the king at dinner, and the Car-

* His remark to Henry, the first time he visited the Cardinal after receiving the title of Defender of the Faith, is upon record: "Prithee, good Hal, is it not enough for you and me to defend ourselves, and leave the Faith to defend itself?"

dinal by, attending; to disgrace him that he never loved—"Harry," says he, "lend me ten pounds." "What to do?" says the king. "To pay three or four of the Cardinal's creditors," quoth he, "to whom my word is passed, and they are come now for the money." "That thou shalt, Will," quoth he. "Creditors of mine!" says the Cardinal, "I'll give your grace my head, if any man can justly ask me of a penny." "No!" says Will, "lend me ten pounds. If I pay it not where thou owest it, I'll give thee twenty for it." "Do so," says the king. "That I will, my liege," says the Cardinal, "though I know I owe no man." With that he lends Will ten pounds. Will goes to the gate, and distributes it to the poor, and returns with the empty bag. "There is thy bag again," says he, "thy creditors are satisfied, and my word out of danger." "Who received it," says the king, "the brewer or the baker?" "Neither, Harry," says Will; "but Cardinal, answer me one thing:—to whom dost thou owe thy soul?" "To God," quoth he. "To whom thy wealth?" "To the poor," says he. "Take thy forfeit, Harry," says the fool, "open confession, open penance! his head is thine: for to the poor at the gate I paid his debt, which he yields is due. Or if thy stony heart will not yield it, Lord Cardinal, save thy head by denying thy word, and lend it me, and, by my troth, hang me when I pay thee!" The king laughed at the jest, and so did the Cardinal; but it grieved him to jest away ten pounds so lightly.

Those who feel curious to know more of this singular trait in the domestic manners of our forefathers, may consult Mr. Douce's "Illustrations of Shakespeare," where considerable light is thrown upon this subject.

CHAPTER IV.

1517—1525. *ÆTAT.* 43.

**MORE AT COURT—QUELLS A POPULAR TUMULT—IS
MADE TREASURER OF THE EXCHEQUER—DEFENDS
HENRY AGAINST LUTHER—MADE SPEAKER OF
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.**

More enters on his official duties—Exerts his influence in the city in quelling a popular commotion—Addresses a letter to the University of Oxford on the cultivation of the Greek language—Is made treasurer of the Exchequer—His intimacy with the king—Rise and progress of the Reformation—King Henry writes a Defence of the Seven Sacraments, and is rewarded by the title of Defender of the Faith—Luther attacks the king's work, and More undertakes its defence—More is chosen Speaker of the House of Commons—His political opposition to Wolsey—Their personal friendship—Sketch of the life and character of Wolsey.

WE now return from More in the bosom of his happy family, to Sir Thomas installed in his new honours at court. From the time he was persecuted into the acceptance of a place in the privy council, may be dated the surrender, in a great measure at least, of his taste for domestic life and his predilection for studious leisure. "He had resolved," says Erasmus, "to be content with his private station; but having been successful on more than one mission abroad, Henry, not discouraged by so unusual a thing as the refusal of a pension, did not rest till he had drawn More into the palace: for why should I not say *drawn*, since no man ever laboured with more industry for admission to a court, than More to keep out of it?" But let us hear the new courtier's own account of his feelings at this time, as described in

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a letter to Bishop Fisher, which Stapleton has preserved :—

“ I came most unwillingly to court, as every one knoweth, and as the king in joke sometimes tells me : and to this day, I seem to sit as awkwardly there, as one who never rode before sitteth in a saddle. But our prince, though I am far from being in his special favour, is so affable and kind to all, that every one, let him be ever so diffident, findeth some reason or other for imagining he loveth him ; just as our London dames persuade themselves that our Lady’s image smileth upon them as they pray before it. I am neither so fortunate as to deserve such favourable tokens, nor so sanguine as to flatter myself that I do ; yet such are his majesty’s virtues and learning, and such his daily increasing industry, that seeing him the more and more advance in good and truly royal accomplishments, I feel this court life begin to hang somewhat less heavily upon me.”

Nor was More singular in this his favourable opinion of Henry’s earlier court, although the novelty of his position, and these early evidences of royal favour cannot but be supposed to have had their influence even upon the judgment of More. Speaking of this court, Erasmus says, “ the fragrance of her honourable fame is widely diffused ; for she has a king who possesses every princely attribute, and a queen in no way inferior to him : and besides this a number of worthy, learned, and discreet subjects.” In a letter from London to the preceptor of the Archduke Ferdinand, he observed : “ Like yourself, I often wish that our court might imitate that of Britain, which is full of scholars, and men proficient in all the arts. They stand round the royal table, where literary and philosophic subjects are discussed, such as the education of a prince, the best methods of study, or some question of morals. In a word, the company at the palace is such that, there is no academy you would undervalue in comparison with

it." It must not, however, be forgotten, that much of this praise reflects back upon Henry's father and exemplary mother.

More's active services were very speedily put in requisition, in consequence of a disturbance in the city of London, the immediate occasion of which was as follows. The citizens had, for several years past, been jealous of the encroachments of foreign artificers, by whom a large part of the mercantile and mechanical business of the city and country was engrossed. The discontent had now reached its height. A number of the citizens, headed by one Lincoln, a broker, applied to Dr. Bell, a celebrated preacher of the time, to read a summary of their grievances from the pulpit, and to preach in behalf of the people against the foreign artificers. Allured by the hope of popularity, the divine unfortunately complied. From the text, "The heaven is the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men," he undertook to show that the land they inhabited was given to Englishmen; and as birds defend their nest, so ought Englishmen to cherish and maintain themselves, and, out of love for their native land, should not hesitate in aggrieving aliens and driving them forth. Convinced by this logic of what they were interested to believe, the apprentices and common people grew bolder in their animosity against the foreigners, and insulted them in the streets. The festival of May-day, when every substantial citizen turned his back on business, and went forth a Maying into the woods and meadows, was chosen for carrying into effect a plot formed for putting all the aliens in the city to death. It was arrested by the vigilance of Sir Thomas, who, in concert with the aldermen of the city, issued a mandate that no person, after nine o'clock on May-day eve, should stir out, but keep his doors shut and his servants within. The indiscretion of one of the aldermen, some days after, blew the discontent into a flame. Several

thousands of the people collected, and broke open the Compter prison and also that of Newgate, in which were several prisoners committed for violence done to foreigners. Their numbers were hourly augmenting, and the aspect of things became alarming. Sir Thomas, as we have already seen, was a favourite in the city, and relying upon the influence of his character, he met this enraged body at St. Martin's-gate, and had nearly succeeded in persuading them to return peaceably to their homes, when some wanton individuals having thrown stones at one of More's companions, the confusion became general. It was now found necessary to call in military force, and this array of tattered men, and squalid women and children, was soon dispersed. Thirteen hundred were taken prisoners, four hundred condemned, and thirteen ordered out to immediate execution; but only the ringleader, Lincoln, actually suffered death; the rest being released at the earnest importunity of the queen, and the king's sisters, Mary of France and Margaret of Scotland. On this occasion, the king's closet presented the singular spectacle of three queens soliciting on their knees the king's pardon for an infuriated mob; it is probable that this was owing to the additional influence of More and Wolsey, to whom Henry could, at this time, refuse nothing.

To this period, also Wood, the Oxford annalist, refers the proof which More gave of his zeal for learning, by his letter to the University of Oxford, on the study of Greek. A kind of civil war had sprung up between the partisans of that language, who were considered as innovators in education, and the larger body, comprehending the aged and those whose reputations were established, and who were content to be no wiser than their forefathers. There existed another cause of this excitement: the public mind was in a ferment on account of the nascent opinions of the Reformation; every thing new was looked upon with suspicion, as possibly connected

with these opinions. A faction of the students denominated themselves Trojans, and had their Priam, Hector, Paris, &c., to denote their hostility of the Greeks. This pedantry had the good effect of awakening the zeal of More for his Grecian masters, and of inducing him to withstand the barbarism which would exclude the noblest productions of the human mind from the education of English youth. As this letter was well-timed and important in its results, we will give an outline of its contents, and the more willingly, as previous biographers have barely alluded to it, though Fiddes, in his *Life of Wolsey*, calls attention thereto, as "containing much deserving of notice." It is headed as follows: "Thomas More to the Rev. Fathers, Procurators, and other members of the Senate of Oxford." After starting with an apology that one with so little pretensions to learning, (*homuncio doctrinâ minus quàm mediocri*), should presume to address the venerable fathers of the national education, he thus continues with much good taste and feeling: "Though the idea of addressing your reverend body at first over-awed me, I was encouraged to make an effort, however humble, in the cause of learning, by the reflection that nothing but ignorance could discourage an honest endeavour. I could not persuade myself to be silent upon a point, where the interests of truth required me to speak. When in London, an account was brought me of the kind of conspiracy, formed in the bosom of my old Alma Mater against a favourite pursuit of mine and my friends." He then goes on to describe the struggle between the two parties, the adherents to the old scholastic forms, and those who favoured the revival of Greek letters. After a good deal of private skirmishing, at length the parties broke out into open war. The opponents of the new learning assumed the appellation of *Trojans*, and by way of derision called their adversaries *Greeks*. The latter gloried in the name, and, fired with the love of the language

of Homer and Plato, arrayed themselves for the defence of their favourites. The leaders of each party took the names of the adverse heroes of the Iliad; nor was it a war of words only; blows were dealt in good earnest, and things were carried to such a pass as to threaten the well-being of this seat of the muses. "At first," says More, "I was disposed to treat this contest as a mere ebullition of youthful folly, but lately, while accompanying the king to Abingdon, news was brought me that things had proceeded to extremities. I was informed that one man had rendered himself particularly conspicuous; a person, wise in his own conceit, a jocular and gifted fellow in the conceit of his own party, but a very madman in the opinion of all good and orderly people. So far did this man forget himself, so far forget his duty, the place, and the sacred season (which was Lent) as to attack the Greeks from the University pulpit; and not the Greek learning only, but all the liberal arts came in for their share of the abuse. What will be thought of our University abroad? What will be said when it is heard that the chair of truth was converted into a scene of Bacchanalian raving; that instead of the pious being edified by the maxims of the Gospel, the profane were diverted by the apish tricks of an insane babbler; one who could hardly smatter Latin, who in the liberal arts was a mere dolt, and who, as far as Greek was in question, knew not a single participle—*ουδεν γινωσκων*. But the zeal of our declaimer did not stop here; he cried aloud that all who sought this Greek learning were heretics, that the readers thereof were devils incarnate, and the willing hearers were on the highway to eternal perdition. Surely it were well for this man of such heated mind and excitable temperament, to be kept safely locked up for a season, and cooled down by a wholesome course of prayer and fasting." More then launches into an eloquent eulogium of the Greek learning, as exemplified not only in the famous

poets, historians, and orators of Greece, but also in the celebrated Christian orators and expounders of the sacred oracles of the Greek church. "Would they restrict," he exclaims, "that august queen of the skies, Theology, to the precincts of one narrow track of learning, and not allow her freely to expatiate in the ample fields of knowledge; to visit the cells not only of a Cyprian, a Jerome, an Augustine, an Ambrose, a Bede, but also the retreats of a Nazianzen, a Basil, a Chrysostom?" He endeavours to awaken his parent university to a sense of what she owes to the cause of Greek learning, by touching on a tender point—the progress already making in these studies in the rival University of Cambridge.* He calls upon the good Warham, upon the Cardinal of York, "*literarum promotor, et ipse literatissimus*,"—a promoter of learning, and himself devoted to letters,† and lastly, upon the king, than whom no prince

* That Greek had made no great progress in the north of the island, we may infer from the following anecdote. When Sadler went on an embassy to the Scottish capital, he had caused his men to wear on their sleeves the Greek motto, ΜΟΝΩ ΑΝΑΚΤΙ ΔΟΤΑΕΤΩ—I serve the king only. Some of the clergy read this MONACHULUS—a *sorry monk*, and complained that this Protestant ambassador intended it as an insult to the body.

† The compliment here paid to the Cardinal is fully merited. Independently of the colleges which he founded, there are other more convincing proofs of the active interest he took in the cause of education. An admirable letter of his, addressed "To the Masters of Ipswich School," contains a syllabus of a course of studies drawn up with great skill and professional minuteness. We give an extract, remarking that the air of royalty in its tone is characteristic. "We imagine nobody can be ignorant of the care, study, and industry, with which we have directed our labours, not for our own private interest, but for that of our country, and of all our citizens, whom we have very much at heart; and in which particular we shall deem ourselves to have been most amply repaid, if, by any Divine blessing, we shall improve the minds of the people. But as it would be imperfect to erect a school, however magnificent, unless attended by learned masters, we have chosen approved teachers, under whose tuition British youth may imbibe both morals and letters; well knowing, that the hopes of the country arise from their minds being formed aright." Wolsey personally superintended the instruction of his godson, the Earl of Richmond, Henry's natural son; as also the domestic education of the Princess Mary. Well had it been for his fame, and for his future peace of mind, had he continued thus to employ his talents, instead of wasting them on those mad schemes of ambition, which proved his ruin in the end!

living has shown more erudition and a more cultivated mind. He concludes by earnestly exhorting the authorities of the university to exert their influence for the putting down of a faction so detrimental to the interests of learning, and so calculated to excite contempt and derision from without. "You are well aware," he adds, "how beneficial this exercise of your zeal will prove to the cause of letters, and how grateful to our illustrious prince, and to the Right Reverend Fathers I have already named. And if, last and least, it might be permitted me to name myself, who have thus been induced to address you from the deep and heart-felt love that I bear to yourselves and to the cause of letters, I can only say, that you would bind me to you by a tenfold obligation, and that, in return, to all and each of you I proffer my good offices in any manner that you can render them available. That God may prosper this your renowned university, and render it daily more flourishing in every virtue and every polite accomplishment of arts and letters, is the prayer of

"THOMAS MORE, KNIGHT.*

"Abingdon, 4th April."

About this period, Sir Thomas received a letter from good Bishop Fisher, in which we find the following recommendation, in which certain predilections for Oxford would appear to be glanced at. "I pray you that our Cambridge men may have some hope in you to be favoured by the king's majesty, that our scholars may be incited to learning by the countenance of so worthy a prince. We have few friends in the court to recommend our cause to his majesty,

* To judge from the following circumstance, this letter was a favourite of More's; Stapleton informs us that he gave it as an exercise to be translated into English by his class, and afterwards into Latin again—a valuable exercise by the way. With respect to the dispute in question, we learn from Erasmus, that the king was induced to interpose in this affair, and, to use his phrase, which is not flattering to the combatants, "silence was imposed on the rabble."

and among these we account you the chief, who always favoured us greatly, even when you were in a less honourable place. But being now raised to the honour of knighthood, and in such great favour with our prince, at which we greatly rejoice and sincerely congratulate your happiness, show what you can now do to serve us. Be pleased kindly to receive the bearer of this, who is both a good scholar in divinity and a preacher effective among the people. He hath great hope in your favour, and, as far as my recommendation can help him, I entreat you to forward him to your power." More, in his reply, thus expresses himself on this subject.

"Right Reverend Father:—The priest of whom you write to me, might, I doubt not, be in possibility of a bishopric, had he some worthier writer than myself to speak for him to the king. As it is, I imagine I have so far prevailed, that his majesty will be no hindrance at least to the same. If I have any favour with the king, which truly is but little, yet, such as it is, I will use it to the uttermost in the service of your Fatherhood and your scholars, to whom I yield perpetual thanks for their warm affection towards me, which has been often testified in their loving letters. When any of them visit London, my house shall be open to them as though it were their own. Farewell, worthy and most courteous prelate, and continue to love me as you have done."

1520. Our knight continued daily to advance in the royal favour. He this year obtained a further promotion, being raised to the dignity of Treasurer of the Exchequer, a station in some respects the same with that of our Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, at present, is on his appointment to be designated by the additional name of Under-treasurer of the Exchequer.

During this year, Francis I. solicited an interview with Henry, and the neighbourhood of the town of Ardres was selected for the place of meeting.

Splendid preparations for the reception of the royal guests were made on both sides, and on the 7th of June, the two monarchs met. They alighted from their horses, embraced each other, and walked arm and arm into the rich pavilion that had been prepared for their reception. More was the orator on this occasion, and addressed the brother monarchs in a speech, congratulating them on the happy meeting, and on their future prospects, of which he hailed it as the joyful omen.

Erasmus writing to his friend Hutten, at this period, observes, "our friend More has been drawn into the palace, and the king will scarcely ever suffer the philosopher to quit him. For, if serious affairs are to be considered, who can give more prudent counsel? or, if the king's mind is to be relaxed by cheerful conversation, where could there be a more facetious companion?"

Roper, who was an eye-witness of the circumstances, relates them with an agreeable simplicity. "So from time to time was he by the king advanced, continuing in his singular favour and trusty service for twenty years. A good part thereof used the king, upon holidays, when he had done his own devotion, to send for him; and there, sometimes in matters of astronomy, geometry, divinity, and such other faculties, and sometimes on his wordly affairs, to converse with him. And other whiles in the night would he have him up upon the leads, there to consider with him the diversities, courses, motions, and operations of the stars and planets. And because he was of a pleasant disposition, it pleased the king and queen, *after the council had supped*, at the time of their own (*i. e.* the royal) supper, to call for him to be merry with them." What Roper adds could not have been discovered by a less near observer, and would scarcely be credited upon less authority: "When, then, he perceived so much in his talk to delight, that he could not once in a month get leave to go home to

his wife and children (whose company he most desired), he, much misliking this restraint on his liberty, began thereupon somewhat to dissemble his nature, and so by little and little from his former mirth to disuse himself, that he was of them from thenceforth, at such seasons, no more so ordinarily sent for." To his retirement at Chelsea, however, the king followed him. "He used, of a particular love, to come of a sudden to Chelsea, and leaning on his shoulder, to talk with him of secret counsel in his garden, yea, and to dine with him upon no inviting." The taste for More's conversation, and the eagerness for his company thus displayed, would be creditable to the king, if his behaviour in after-time had not converted them into the strongest proofs of utter depravity. Even in Henry's favour there was somewhat tyrannical, and his very friendship was dictatorial and self-willed. It was reserved for Henry afterwards to exhibit the singular, and perhaps solitary, example of a man who was softened by no recollection of a communion of counsels, of studies, of amusements, of social pleasures, and who did not consider that the remembrance of intimate friendship with such a man as More bound him to the observance of common humanity, or even of bare justice. In the moments of Henry's partiality, the sagacity of More was not so utterly blinded by his good-nature, that he did not in some degree penetrate into the true character of caresses from a beast of prey. "When I saw the king walking with him for an hour, holding his arm about his neck, I rejoiced, and said to Sir Thomas, how happy he was whom the king had so familiarly entertained, as I had never seen him do to any one before, except Cardinal Wolsey. 'I thank our Lord, son,' said he, 'I find his Grace my very good lord indeed, and I believe he doth as singularly favour me as any other subject within this realm; howbeit, son Roper, I may tell thee, I have no cause to be proud thereof; for if my head would

win him a castle in France, when there was war between us, it should not fail to go.' "

In a letter of this period he thus speaks of himself: " I am so occupied the greater part of the day, that I have no time for myself, or, which is the same thing, for my studies. For when I come home, I must chat with my wife, prattle with my children, and speak with my servants, for I am sure I have a right to reckon these things among my affairs; and needful affairs they are, unless one would be a stranger in one's own house. It is a part of the business of life to be affable and pleasing to those, whom either nature, chance, or choice has made our companions, and yet there must be a mean in this, as in every thing else, so that we do not spoil them with over-kindness, and by too great indulgence convert our servants into masters. Well, whole days, months, and years, pass in this manner; and, now, pray when am I to find any time to write?"

His conversation had become so entertaining to the king and queen, that he could rarely obtain permission to spend an evening with his family; nor could he be absent from the court two days in succession without being called for. As yet, however, he had not so much of the courtier about him, as to consider the claims of his family in this particular, as inferior to those of his sovereign. Restraining, therefore, the natural vivacity of his disposition, he contrived that his conversation in the royal presence should become less and less attractive, and by this address he, in part, regained his liberty.

Between the years 1517 and 1522, we find that More was employed at various times at Bruges, in missions like his first to the Flemish government, or at Calais in watching and conciliating Francis I.; with whom Henry and Wolsey found it convenient to keep up friendly appearances. To trace the date of More's reluctant journeys in the course of the uninteresting attempts of politicians on both sides to

gain or dupe each other, would be vain, without some outline of the negotiations in which he was employed, and repulsive to most readers if the inquiry promised a better chance of a successful result. Wolsey appears to have occasionally appointed commissioners to conduct his own affairs as well as those of his master at Calais, where they received instructions from London with the greatest rapidity, and whence it was easy to manage negotiations, and to shift them speedily, with Brussels and Paris ; with the additional advantage, that it might be somewhat easier to conceal from one of those jealous courts the secret dealings of that of England with the other, than if the despatches had been sent directly from London to the place of their destination. Of this commission More was once, at least, an unwilling member. Erasmus, in a letter to Peter Giles, on the 15th of November, 1518, says, " More is still at Calais, of which he is heartily tired. He lives with great expense, and is engaged in business most odious to him. Such are the rewards reserved by kings for their favourites."* Two years after, More writes more bitterly to Erasmus of his own residence and occupations. " I approve your determination never to be involved in the busy trifling of princes ; from which, as you love me, you must wish that I were extricated. You cannot imagine how painfully I feel myself plunged in them, for nothing can be more odious to me than this legation. I am here banished to a petty seaport, of which the air and the earth are equally disagreeable to me. Abhorrent as I am by nature from strife, even when it is profitable, as at home, you may judge how wearisome it is here, where it is attended by loss."† On More's journey in summer 1519, he had harboured hopes of being consoled by seeing Erasmus at Calais, for all the tiresome pageantry, selfish scuf-

* *Erasm. Opp.* iii. 357.† *Erasm. Opp.* iii. 589.

fles, and paltry frauds, which he was to witness at the congress of kings,* where More could find little to abate those splenetic views of courts, which his disappointed benevolence breathed in Utopia. In 1521, Wolsey twice visited Calais during the residence of More, who appears to have then had a weight in council, and a place in the royal favour, second only to those of the cardinal.

In 1522, the Emperor Charles V. paid a visit to England, and was received by Henry with great magnificence. At about a mile from St. George's bar was erected a tent of cloth of gold, where, during the time the royal personages reposed themselves, More delivered an oration, eloquently congratulating the two princes upon the love and amity that subsisted between them. Splendid pageants were prepared for the occasion; "nor must we forget," says the chronicler of the day, "how the citizens, well apparelled, stood within the rails on the left side of the streets, and the clergy on the right, in rich copes, swinging their censers beside the princes as they passed; nor how all the streets were richly hung with cloth of gold, silver, velvet, and arras; nor how in every house almost there was minstrelsy, and over every street these two verses in letters of gold:

CAROLUS, HENRICUS, VIVANT DEFENSOR UTERQUE,
HENRICUS FIDEI, CAROLUS ECCLESIAE."

In the meantime the public mind was in a ferment. A new, and as yet unheard-of revolution had broken out in the north of Germany, and had already begun to extend its influence in England. Men began to array themselves in the hostile ranks of Catholics and Lutherans; and, at length, a term was invented,

* Opp. lii. 450. Morus Erasmo, e Cantuaria, 11 Jun. 1519. From the dates of the following letters of Erasmus, it appears that the hopes of More were disappointed.

which was destined to be the watchword of party, the *slogan* for the gathering of discontented clans, the signal-fire that, like the beacon of Agamemnon,* was to speed its fiery course from hill to hill, but, unlike that transmitted flame, should announce, not the termination of a ten years' war, but the outburst of a conflict, whose consummation, what prophet can foretell? PROTESTANT is a *nom de guerre* of more extended influence than any that human ingenuity had before devised.†

Luther's motive for *protesting* originated in a mere matter of feeling about dollars and cents. Pope Leo X., with a view to raise money to complete that splendid monument of art, St. Peter's, which his predecessor Julius II. had begun, published an Indulgence,‡ which included the northern provinces of

* See the animated opening of the *Agamemnon* of the Shakspeare of Greece—Æschylus.

† Bishop Andrews was asked by King James I., whether the famous Italian convert, Antonio de Dominis, were a *Protestant* or not? "Truly, your majesty," replied the bishop, "I am unable to say; but this I know, that he is a *DETASTANT* of certain opinions of Rome."

To how many will not this definition apply, whose Protestantism has "this extent, no more."

‡ "It is reasonable, and even it is salutary to us, that God, whilst he remits both sin and the temporal punishment, which sin had merited, should yet, by way of check, to restrain us within the boundaries of duty, demand from us some kind of temporal chastisement; lest, emancipated too soon from the bonds of justice, we nourish a presumptuous confidence, and abuse the facility of obtaining pardon.

"It is, consequently, in order to fulfil this obligation that we are subjected to a certain series of painful duties—duties which, also, we are bound to comply with, in a spirit of deep humility and contrition. It was the necessity of these labours of satisfaction that compelled the church, during the early ages, to impose upon sinners those heavy mortifications which we call the *Canonical penances*.

"When, therefore, now, the church imposes upon sinners any painful and laborious duties, the act of performing these is what we denominate *Satisfaction*. And when, in consequence of the extraordinary fervour, or piety, of the penitent, the church thinks proper to mitigate the severity of her discipline, this act of relaxation is the thing which we term an *Indulgence*."—BOSSUET'S *Exposition*.

1 Corinthians v. 3, 4, 5. In this passage, St. Paul excommunicates the man who had been guilty of incest. But, in the second chapter of his second Epistle—having been now informed of the sorrow and repentance of the criminal—he tells the Corinthians that he remits the punishment which, lately, his wisdom had deemed so salutary. *Wherefore*, he says, *I beseech you, that you would confirm your charity towards him. And to whom you have forgiven anything, I also. For what I for-*

Germany. The collecting of the contributions was given to a Dominican friar, which excited the jealousy of the Augustine order, to which Luther belonged. He was a young man of ardent mind and strong prejudices, and he beheld with resentment the lucrative office bestowed upon the rival order—*hinc illæ lacrymæ!* hence, all the heart-burnings generated by the *esprit de corps*, which alone was active at that moment in the young and enthusiastic friar. He published a thesis, seasoned with bold declamation against the rapacity of the court of Rome, but the main object of which was personal invective against the Dominican collectors, their avarice and their extortion. So far there appeared little for the church to apprehend. When the dispute was reported to Leo X., he treated it lightly, saying it was merely a

give, if I have forgiven anything for your sakes, I have done it in the person of Christ. This mitigation by St. Paul is precisely what we mean by an indulgence.

In like manner, during the early ages of the church, it was the frequent practice among the bishops to grant, at the request of the martyrs, a remission of the canonical penances to those individuals, whose repentance was marked by peculiar fervour. Tertullian, in the second century, St. Cyprian in the third, and many Fathers and Councils, in the fourth and fifth ages, attest the frequency of this custom: whilst also they inform us, that, sometimes, without any solicitation from the martyrs, it was observed in favour of the sick, and the infirm. This relaxation, again, was exactly our indulgence.

The Catholic is very far from denying that indulgences have been abused. They have been abused very often, and very grossly; and we lament the evil more feelingly than the Protestant derides it. But, after all, where is the great room for wonder? For, what do not men abuse? They abuse every thing; and frequently, the best things the most. There is nothing here below that is completely screened from the intrusion of the human passions. The mischiefs, however, that have resulted from indulgences, did not arise from the nature itself of the institution, but from the perversity and wickedness of the individuals who misapplied, and the ignorance and superstition of the men who misconceived them. An indulgence is not—as the Protestant imagines—an encouragement to sin. On the contrary, it implies, and presupposes, a sincere conversion from sin; a real detestation of vice, and a fixed determination to avoid it for the time to come. It is not a dispensation from penance:—it demands penance. Not an exemption from acts of piety:—it requires prayer, mortification, humility, &c. In short, just like the act of St. Paul to the incestuous Corinthian; or like that of the early pastors in favour of the sick, and the peculiarly penitent, an indulgence is simply a remission, or mitigation, of those temporal punishments, which the sinner still owes to the eternal justice, even after the forgiveness of the guilt of his offences.

squabble among friars. Even Luther, apprehensive of the offence he had given by his invectives against the court of Rome, thought it prudent to address a submissive letter to the pontiff, concluding in these words: "Wherefore, most holy father, I throw myself prostrate at your feet, with all that I have or own. My life and death are in your hands. Call or recall me, approve or condemn me as you please. I shall acknowledge your voice as the voice of Christ, who presides and speaks in your person." All eyes were now turned towards Luther; his position was conspicuous; he was recognized as the champion of a cause; he had poised his weapons, felt his strength, and was impelled to further efforts. It is hard for the combatant to lay down the sword of power he has once taken up; the field of polemical warfare has rarely, if ever, exhibited its Washington. A zeal, in which vanity was no inactive ingredient, now seized on the young reformer, and from attacking the outworks of the church, he boldly ventured on the very sanctuary itself. He had been mildly admonished, but in vain; and, at length, in 1520, Pope Leo X. published a bull in which he condemned as heretical certain opinions published in the writings of Luther; allowed him a reasonable time to retract his errors, and pronounced him excommunicated, if he continued obstinate after the expiration of that term. But success and impunity had taught the reformer to deride that authority, before which he had formerly trembled. He boldly appealed from the head of the church, whom he stigmatized as "the apostate, the antichrist, the blasphemer of the divine word," to a general council; and erecting a funeral pile without the walls of Wittenberg, and calling together the inhabitants, he, with much solemnity, cast into the flames the books of the canon law, the writings of his antagonists, and the bull of Pope Leo against himself, exclaiming in a tone, which some have considered as the result of a diseased mind—"Because

ye have troubled the holy of the Lord, be ye burnt with everlasting fire!"

But to return to More; if he had not the faculty of a seer, he had the eye of a philosophical observer, and in those "coming events that cast their shadows before," he saw the new convulsion that threatened the land. In announcing his presentiments, there is something very grand and solemn in the imagery he employs. "I perceive the signs of the coming evil, like as before a great storm the sea swelleth, and hath unwonted motions, without any wind stirring."

Taking one day his favourite walk upon the banks of the Thames with his son-in-law Roper, they fell into conversation upon a topic dear to every patriot's heart—their country. Roper took occasion from a recent festivity, which had called forth a display of public feeling, "to commend to his father-in-law the happy estate of this realm, which had so Catholic and zealous a prince, that no heretic durst show his face; so learned and virtuous a clergy, so grave and sound a nobility, such loving and obedient subjects, all agreeing together in one faith and dutifulness, as though they had been but one heart and one soul."

When he paused, he found that More had fallen into one of his usual musings. After some moments' silence, he turned to Roper, and pressing him by the arm, observed:—"My son, Roper, you speak the truth; true, indeed, is all that you say:"—and passing in review the different estates of the realm, he far outdid his son-in-law in his commendations of the same; "and yet, son," continued he, "I pray God that some of us, as high as we seem to sit upon the mountains, treading under our feet like ants the enemies of the faith, live not to see the day when we would gladly wish to be in league with them, and to suffer them to have their churches quietly to themselves, so that they would be content to let us have ours as peaceably."

Roper urged many reasons to show why he thought his father-in-law had no cause for such gloomy forebodings. "Well, well," said More, shaking his head, "I pray God, Roper, that some of us do not live to see that day." But, says Cresacre, who relates the conversation, as he showed no reason for all these his speeches, my uncle said somewhat in a choler: "By my troth, sir, but all this is very desperately spoken!" "I cry God mercy," said my uncle to me afterwards, "but that was the very word I used." Sir Thomas perceiving him to be somewhat angry, resumed his usual cheerful tone, and patting him on the shoulder, said to him in his merry way, "Well, well, son Roper, it shall not be so, it shall not be so!"

But yet, adds Cresacre, my uncle Roper was himself destined to be a witness of the truth of the prediction. He was still living in the fifteenth year of Elizabeth's reign, when he saw religion turned topsy turvy, and no hope of any amendment. The pious grandson, in the plenitude of his zeal, and from the depth of his reverence for More's character, goes on to declare, that "he has no doubt, but that God, in his love to his faithful servant, had been pleased to make him a partaker of some portion of his secrets."*

In the meantime, details of all that was passing in Germany were officially transmitted to England. Wolsey, who, in virtue of his office of Legate of the Holy See, was bound to oppose these new doctrines, attended by the other prelates, and by the papal and imperial ambassadors, went in procession to St. Paul's, the venerable Bishop Fisher preached from the Cross in front of the church, and the works of

* There have been ages prone to credit the marvellous; that in which More flourished was not free from this spirit: but to attempt to limit the operations of Providence, and to glory in a sceptical indifference, was an extreme reserved for the age in which we live. Many wise and good men have been of opinion, that presentiments and prognostications, in respect to events of moment, may be permitted for useful purposes, and are not inconsistent with the principles of either natural or revealed religion.

Luther, condemned by the pontiff, were burned in presence of the assembled multitude. Henry, whose education, as we have seen, had given him a taste for school divinity, determined, with that chivalrous spirit which ennobled the earlier and better years of his life, to enter in person the controversial lists. This was in the month of May, and the following October was completed "The Defence of the Seven Sacraments against Martin Luther, published by Henry, the eighth of that name, the most unconquered King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland,"—a title that bears the impress of the chivalric age. It was published in London, 1521, Antwerp, 1522, and Rome, 1543. That it was Henry's own composition is asserted by himself; that it was retouched and improved by the cardinal and the bishop of Rochester, was the opinion of the public. More was also believed to have had a hand in the work, but we have his own assurance that he "was a mere sorter-out and placer of the principal contents of the book."^{*}

Clarke, dean of Windsor, carried the royal production to Rome, and, in a full consistory, submitted it to the inspection and approbation of the pontiff, with an assurance, that, as his master had refuted the errors of Luther with his pen, so was he ready to oppose the disciples of the heresiarch with his sword, should the interests of the church require it. Leo, in a formal bull, rewarded the champion of orthodoxy by conferring on him the title of DEFENDER OF THE FAITH—an appellation that Henry's successors still

* Old Fuller says in his quaint manner: "None suspect the king's lack of learning for such a design, but many his lack of leisure from his pleasures. It is probable that some other gardener gathered the flowers, though King Henry had the honour to wear the posy." Luther made the same objection to the work, and yet the king's own words are: "Although you fain yourself to think my book not my own, but to my rebuke (as it liketh you to affirm) put on by subtle sophisters; yet it is well known for mine, and for mine I avouch it."

Collier, remarking on the king's work, observes, that "He leans too much on his character as monarch, argues in his garter robes, and writes as it were with his sceptre."

claim, though the title that guaranteed it has been abandoned. In July of the following year, Luther replied to the king "with an intemperance of declamation, which scandalized his friends, while it gave joy to his enemies;" so says the elegant Lingard: but which, in the vigorous but more homely language of Roper, becomes "a mass of ridicule, invective, and scorn, compounded with a due admixture of filth, and hurled at the royal head." Henry complained to his patron, the Elector; the German princes considered the work as an insult to crowned heads: and, at the earnest entreaty of Christian, King of Denmark, Luther condescended to write an apology.

Let us hear the impartial Mr. Hallam relate this story. "Luther, intoxicated with arrogance, and deeming himself a more prominent individual among the human species than any monarch, treated Henry, in replying to his book, with the rudeness that characterized his temper. A few years afterwards, indeed, he thought proper to write a letter of apology for the language he had held towards the king; but this letter, a strange medley of abjectness and impertinence, excited only contempt in Henry, and was published by him with a severe commentary. Luther's letter bears date at Wittemberg, September 1, 1525. After saying that he had written against the king 'foolishly and precipitately,' which was true, he adds 'at the instigation of those who were but little disposed towards your majesty,' which was surely a pretence, since who at Wittemberg, in 1521, could have any motive to wish that Henry should be so scurrilously treated? He then bursts forth into the most absurd attack on Wolsey, 'that monster, the public odium of God and of men, the Cardinal of York, the very pest of your kingdom.' This was a singular style to adopt in writing to a king, whom he affected to propitiate; Wolsey being nearer than any man to Henry's heart. Thence, relapsing into his tone of abasement, he says, 'so that being now

utterly ashamed that I should have suffered myself to have been betrayed into such levity against such and so great a king, by malignant instruments like these, I dread to raise up my eyes before your majesty; I especially, who am but filth and the merest worm, fit for nothing but to be condemned and despised by all, &c.' Among the many things which Luther said and wrote, I know not one more extravagant than this letter, which almost justifies the supposition *that there was a vein of insanity in his very remarkable character.*" (*Constit. Hist.* I. 64.)

But though More had no hand in the book of the king his master, it was not likely that a mind of such activity as his, and so zealous for the faith of his fathers, would allow its powers to lie dormant on so tempting an occasion for their display. We accordingly find that, early in the following year, he published a reply to Luther's attack upon the King, under the title, *Vindictio Henrici VIII. a calumniis Lutheri*. Cresacre's account of the affair is in his usual pithy manner. "As Luther had used nothing in his book but the figure of rhetoric called *Sauce-malapert*, playing the very varlet with the King, More beat him with his own weapons. But as it seemed not correspondent to his gravity, the book appeared under the name of *Gulielmus Rosseus*." *

In this work, More, not content with refuting the arguments, has caught the reprehensible tone of his adversary; justifying the reproach of Bishop Atterbury, that these two combatants had the best knack of any men in Europe at calling bad names in good Latin. There are men who can look on with pleasure at these spiritual gladiators, and enjoy the excitement of a controversial "set-to," and of this description appears to have been More's great grandson. Roper exclaims, with all the zest of the arena, "To see how

* In this *nom de guerre*, could More have had in his eye the popular French verb *Rosser*, which Boiste interprets "*battre quelqu'un violemment.*"

he handleth Luther *would do any man good!*" (p. 110); and to prove how the illustrious chancellor "punished" his adversary when he had "got him into Chancery," he treats his learned readers to a long Latin quotation of one of the most highly seasoned morceaux of the said Rejoinder.*

To this year also Rastell refers More's "Treatise upon those words of Scripture, *Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*" It is a work of considerable merit, and composed in More's most vigorous manner. For some considerable extracts the reader is referred to our volume of *Selections*.

1523. This year, by the king's especial direction, Sir Thomas was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons. He excused himself, as usual, on the ground of alleged disability. His excuse was justly pronounced to be inadmissible. The journals of parliament are lost, or at least have not been printed. The rolls of parliament exhibit only a short account of what occurred, which is necessarily an unsatisfactory substitute for the deficient journals. But as the matter personally concerns Sir Thomas More, and as the account of it given by his son-in-law, then an inmate in his house, agrees with the abridgment of the rolls, as far as the latter goes, it has been thought proper in this place to insert the very words of Roper's narrative. It may be reasonably conjectured that the speeches of More were copied from his manuscript by his pious son-in-law.—"Since I per-

* "It were well would the polemic champion bear the following, inscribed as mottos upon his shield.

"Il faut mieux taire une vérité, que de la dire de mauvaïse grâce.

"Le silence judicieux est toujours meilleur qu'une vérité non charitable."—*St. Francis of Sales*.

"If we dispute with the enemies of the faith, let us silence them without anger, and without harshness. For if we dispute with anger, we seem no longer to have confidence in our cause, but to be led by passion; but if we do so with gentleness, we manifest a true confidence. Where passion is, the Holy Spirit dwelleth not."—*St. Chrysostom, Hom. in Acta. xvii.*

An old writer says in his quaint manner, "If the zeal for God's house eat up *the man*, it should not eat up *the gentleman*."

ceive, most redoubted sovereign, that it standeth not with your pleasure to reform this election, and cause it to be changed, but have, by the mouth of the most reverend father in God, the legate, your highness's chancellor, thereunto given your most royal assent, and have of your benignity determined, far above that I may bear, to enable me, and for this office to repute me meet; rather than that you should seem to impute unto your Commons that they had unmeetly chosen, I am ready obediently to conform myself to the accomplishment of your Highness's pleasure and commandment.—In most humble wise I beseech your Majesty that I may make to you two lowly petitions: the one privately concerning myself, the other for the whole assembly of your Commons' house. For myself, most gracious sovereign, that if it mishap me in anything hereafter that is, on the behalf of your Commons, in your high presence, to be declared, to mistake my message, and, in lack of good utterance, by my mishearsal to pervert or impair their prudent instructions, that it may then like your most noble Majesty to give me leave to repair again unto the Commons' house, and to confer with them and take their advice what things I shall, on their behalf, utter and speak before your royal Grace.

“ Mine other humble request, most excellent prince, is this: forasmuch as there be of your Commons here by your high commandment assembled for your parliament, a great number which are after the accustomed manner appointed in the Commons' house to treat and advise of the common affairs among themselves apart; and albeit, most dear liege lord, that according to *your most prudent advice*, by your honourable writs every where declared, there hath been as due diligence used in sending up to your highness's court of parliament the most discreet persons out of every quarter that men could esteem meet thereunto; thereby it is not to be

doubted but that there is a very substantial assembly of right wise, meet, and politique persons. Yet, victorious prince, since among so many wise men, neither is every man wise alike, nor among so many alike well-witted, nor yet well-spoken; and as it often happeth that as much folly is uttered with painted polished speech, so many boisterous and rude in language give right substantial counsel; and since also in matters of great importance, the mind is often so occupied in the matter, that a man rather studieth what to say than how; by reason whereof the wisest man and best spoken in a whole country fortuneth, when his mind is fervent in the matter, somewhat to speak in such wise as he would afterwards wish to have been uttered otherwise, and yet no worse will had when he spake it, than he had when he would so gladly change it. Therefore, most gracious sovereign, considering that in your high court of parliament is nothing treated but matter of weight and importance, concerning your realm and your own royal estate, it could not fail to put to silence from the giving of their advice and counsel many of your discreet Commons, to the great hindrance of your common affairs, unless every one of your Commons were utterly discharged from all doubt and fear how any thing that it should happen them to speak, should happen of your highness to be taken. And in this point, though your well-known and proved benignity putteth every man in good hope; yet such is the weight of the matter, such is the reverend dread that the timorous hearts of your natural subjects conceive towards your highness, our most redoubted king and undoubted sovereign, that they cannot in this point find themselves satisfied, except your gracious bounty therein declared put away the scruple of their timorous minds, and put them out of doubt. It may, therefore, like your most abundant Grace to give to all your Commons here assembled, your most gracious

license and pardon freely, without doubt of your dreadful displeasure, every man to discharge his conscience, and boldly in every thing incident among us to declare his advice, and whatsoever happeneth any man to say, that it may like your noble majesty, of your inestimable goodness, to take all in good part, interpreting every man's words, how uncunningly soever they may be couched, to proceed yet of good zeal towards the profit of your realm, and honour of your royal person; the prosperous state and preservation whereof, most excellent sovereign, is the thing which we all, your majesty's humble loving subjects, according to the most bounden duty of our natural allegiance, most highly desire and pray for."

According to the Parliamentary history, he introduced into his speech a story by way of illustration, which is certainly in his manner. He told of Phormio, the philosopher, who invited the great Hannibal to attend one of his lectures. That great commander accepted the invitation, and Phormio commenced reading a treatise *De Re Militare*—on the Art of War. Hannibal upon hearing this, called the philosopher an arrogant fool, to presume to teach one, whom experience had made skilful in all the arts of war. "Even so," said More, "if I should presume to speak before his majesty of learning, of the well ordering of the government, and such like matters, the king who is so deeply learned, such a master of prudence and experience, might well address me in the same language as Hannibal did Phormio. Wherefore, he humbly besought his majesty to choose another speaker." To this speech the cardinal, in quality of chancellor, replied:—"That his majesty, by long experience of his services, was well acquainted with his wit, learning, and discretion; and therefore he thought the Commons had chosen the fittest person to be their speaker."

It is probable that the design of the knight in this speech was to remonstrate against the known haugh-

tinness with which Henry treated his parliaments; and, under colour of the profoundest awe and veneration, to give the sovereign a reproof, the more keen because the less ostensible, for his arbitrary restraint on the freedom of debate. If the speech be considered in this point of view, the speaker will be found to manifest great dexterity and a tact peculiarly his own. A seeming compliance with Henry's haughty humour was, indeed, the only manner in which the king could be reproved with a hope of success.

In Parliament, not only was his conduct upright and manly, but his views more profound than those of his contemporaries, anticipating some of the principles of political economy developed in our day. On one occasion, a subsidy having been demanded by government, for carrying on a war against the emperor Charles V., the Commons allowed its expediency, but hesitated to grant it, on the ground that, as it must be paid in money, and not in goods, all the specie in their hands would be drained away, and, for want of money, the nation would soon relapse into barbarism. More, in reply, ridiculed this idea, and said that the money ought not to be considered as lost or taken away, but only as passed into other hands of their kindred and nation. "You have no reason," added he, "to fear this penury or scarceness of money, the intercourse of things being now so established throughout the world, that there must be a perpetual circulation of all that can be necessary for mankind. Thus your commodities will ever find out money: and not to go far, I will instance your own merchants only; who, let me assure you, will always be as glad of your corn and cattle, as you can be of any thing they can bring."*

The following particulars, afforded us by Roper, are singular, and, according to Sir James Mackintosh, "not easily reconcilable with the intimate

* Herbert's *Henry the Eighth*, p. 112.

connection then subsisting between the speaker and the government."

"At this parliament Cardinal Wolsey found himself much aggrieved with the burgesses thereof; for that nothing was so soon done or spoken therein, but that it was immediately blown abroad in every alehouse. It fortuned at that parliament that a very great subsidy was demanded, which the cardinal, fearing it would not pass the Commons' house, determined, for the furtherance thereof, to be there present himself. Before where coming, after long debating there, whether it was better but with a few of his lords, as the most opinion of the house was, or with his whole train royally to receive him. 'Masters,' quoth Sir Thomas More, 'forasmuch as my lord cardinal lately, ye wot well, laid to our charge the lightness of our tongues for things uttered out of this house, it shall not in my mind be amiss to receive him with all his pomp, with his maces, his pillars, his pole-axes, his hat, and great seal too; to the intent, that if he finds the like fault with us hereafter, we may the bolder frame ourselves to lay the blame on those whom his grace bringeth here with him.* Whereunto the house wholly agreeing, he was received accordingly. Where, after he had by a solemn oration, by many reasons proved how necessary it was the demand then moved should be granted; and farther showed that less would not serve to maintain the prince's purpose; he seeing the company sitting still silent, and thereunto nothing answering, and, contrary to his expectation, showing in themselves towards his request no towardness of inclination, said to them, 'Masters, you

* We read the same indication of the public feeling in the Cardinal's address to Dr. Barnes, who had preached a sermon at Cambridge, reflecting upon his love of pomp and luxury. "What," said he, "Master Doctor! had you not a sufficient scope in the Scriptures to teach the people, but that my golden shoes, my pole-axes, my pillars, my golden cushions, my crosses, did so sore offend you that you must make us a ridiculum caput before the people?"

have many wise and learned men amongst you, and since I am from the king's own person sent hither unto you, to the preservation of yourselves and of all the realm, I think it meet in you to give me some reasonable answer.' Whereat every man holding his peace, then began he to speak to one Master Marney, afterwards Lord Marney; 'How say you,' quoth he, 'Master Marney?' who making him no answer neither, he severally asked the same question of divers others, accounted the wisest of the company, to whom, when none of them all would give so much as one word, having agreed before, as the custom was, to give answer by their speaker; 'Masters,' quoth the cardinal, 'unless it be the manner of your house, as of likelihood it is, by the mouth of your speaker, whom you have chosen for trusty and wise (as indeed he is), in such cases to utter your minds, here is, without doubt, a marvellously obstinate silence:' and thereupon he required answer of Mr. Speaker; who first reverently, on his knees, excusing the silence of the house, abashed at the presence of so noble a personage, able to amaze the wisest and best learned in the realm; and then, by many probable arguments, proving that for them to make answer was neither expedient nor agreeable with the ancient liberty of the house; in conclusion for himself, showed, that though they had all with their voices trusted him, yet except every one of them could put into his own head their several wits, he alone in so weighty a matter was unmeet to make his grace answer. Whereupon the cardinal, displeased with Sir Thomas More, that had not in this parliament in all things satisfied his desire, suddenly rose and departed."*

This passage, observes Sir J. Mackintosh, deserves attention as a specimen of the mild independence and quiet steadiness of More's character, and also as

* Roper, p. 13—21.

a proof how he perceived the strength which the Commons had gained by the power of the purse, which was daily and silently growing, and which could be disturbed only by such an unseasonable show of an immature authority as might too soon have roused the crown to resistance. It is one among many instances of the progress of the influence of parliaments in the midst of their apparently indiscriminate submission, and it affords a pregnant proof that we must not estimate the spirit of our forefathers by the humility of their demeanour.

The reader will observe how nearly this example was followed by a succeeding speaker, comparatively of no distinction, but in circumstances far more memorable, in the answer of Lenthall to Charles I., when that unfortunate prince came to the House of Commons to arrest five leading members of that assembly, who had incurred his displeasure.

When the short session of parliament was closed, Wolsey, in his gallery of Whitehall, said to More, "I wish to God you had been at Rome, Mr. More, when I made you speaker."—"Your grace not offended, so would I too, my lord," replied Sir Thomas; "for then should I have seen the place I long have desired to visit." More turned the conversation, by saying that he liked this gallery better than the cardinal's at Hampton Court.

This, perhaps, broke off a quarrel for the time, but the fact was, as Erasmus remarks in one of his letters, that the cardinal was jealous of the knight's abilities, and feared him more than he loved him.

Of this he shortly after gave a proof by his endeavour to persuade the king to send Sir Thomas as ambassador to Spain. He tried to effect his purpose by magnifying the learning and wisdom of his rival, and his peculiar fitness for a conciliatory adjustment of the difficult matters then at issue between the king and his kinsman the emperor. Henry approved of the cardinal's suggestion, and made the proposal

to More, who, considering the unsuitableness of the Spanish climate to his constitution, and, perhaps, suspecting Wolsey of sinister purposes, earnestly besought Henry not to send his faithful servant to his grave. The king, who also suspected Wolsey of being actuated by jealousy, answered, "It is not our meaning, Mr. More, to do you any hurt; but to do you good we should be glad: we shall, therefore, employ you otherwise."* Sir Thomas More could boast that he had never asked the king the value of a penny for himself; and without any solicitation on his part, on the 25th of December, 1525,† the king appointed him chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, as successor of Sir Anthony Wingfield; an office of dignity and profit which More continued to hold for nearly three years.

That there was an unfriendly feeling on the part of Wolsey towards More, is apparent from several little anecdotes, and among the rest from the following, as related by Roper.

On a time the cardinal had drawn a draft of certain conditions of peace between England and France, and he asked Sir Thomas's advice therein, beseeching him earnestly that he would tell him, if there were any thing therein to be disliked; and "he spoke this so heartily," said Sir Thomas, that he verily believed the cardinal in earnest in wishing to hear his advice therein. But when More gave his honest opinion, and showed that the draft might have been amended, he suddenly rose in a rage, and

* More, p. 53, with a slight variation.

† "Such is the information which I have received from the Records in the Tower. The accurate writer of the article on More in the *Biographia Britannica*, is perplexed by finding Sir Thomas More, chancellor of the duchy, as one of the negotiators of a treaty in August 1526, which seems to the writer in the *Biographia* to bring down the death of Wingfield to near that time; he being on all sides acknowledged to be More's immediate predecessor. But there is no difficulty, unless we needlessly assume that the negotiation with which Wingfield was concerned related to the same treaty which More concluded. On the contrary, the first appears to have been a treaty with Spain; the last a treaty with France."—*Sir J. Mackintosh*.

said, "By the Mass! thou art the veriest fool of all the council." Sir Thomas smiled, and drily rejoined, "God be thanked! that the king, our master, hath but one fool in all his council."

This incident, perhaps, led to an allusion in More's book "On Comfort in Tribulation," where he relates a very amusing story of a certain prelate, who, when he had made an oration before a large assembly, would bluntly ask those who sat at table with him, "how they all liked it? and as he sat upon thorns for a commendation of his eloquence, the man who did not speak of it as favourably as he could wish, got, you may be sure, but little thanks for his labour."*

More had the courage, on more than one occasion, to oppose the haughty cardinal at the Council board, as he had formerly done in Parliament: To one of these occasions we may no doubt refer the story which Sir Thomas tells in one of his letters, relative to the cardinal's project that England should support the Emperor in his war with France. "*Some*," he writes, "thought it wise, that we should sit still and leave them alone. But, evermore, my lord used the fable of the wise men; who, because they would not sit out and get drenched in the rain that was to make every one a fool, hid themselves in caves. But when the rain had washed away the others' wisdom, and those came out of their caves, and would make a display of theirs, the fools agreeing together against them, proved too strong for them, and forced them to come into their terms. And so, said his grace, if we were to be so wise as to sit in peace, while the fools fought it out, they would afterwards make common cause and subdue us. This fable, adds More, helped the king and the realm to spend many a fair penny."†

* This story is told in full in More's works, p. 1221, and as a fair specimen of his humour, will be given entire in the volume of *Selections*.

† These intrigues did not redound to the glory of the country. Our merry neighbours even then had begun to make our diplomatic inferiority the subject of their sport and ridicule. A contemporary writer

And yet, in spite of this occasional "sparring," it is satisfactory to be able to produce evidence that there existed neither that rancour on the part of More, nor that "secret brooding over his revenge," which Sir J. Mackintosh thought he discovered in the conduct of those great men. (*Brit. States.* p. 39.) This testimony is afforded us by that invaluable publication, "The State Papers," which we shall often have occasion to quote.

Wolsey to King Henry VIII.

SIRE:—After my most humble recommendations, it may like your Grace to understand, that I have shown unto the bearer of this, Sir Thomas More, diverse matters to be by him, on my behalf, declared unto your Highness, beseeching the same that, at convenient time, it may be your pleasure to hear him make report thereof accordingly. And, Sire, whereas it hath been customed that the Speakers of the Parliament, in consideration of their diligence and pains taken, have had, though the Parliament hath been right soon finished, above the £100 ordinary, a reward of £100, for the better maintenance of their household, and other charges sustained in the same; I suppose, Sire, that the faithful diligence of the said Sir Thomas More, in all your causes treated in this your late Parliament, as well for your subsidy, right honourably passed, as otherwise, considered, no man could better deserve the same than he hath done. Wherefore, your pleasure known therein, I shall cause the same to be advanced to him accordingly; ascertaining your Grace, that I was the rather moved to put your Highness in remembrance thereof, be-

referring to these events, observes, "The Frenchmen of late days made a play, or a disguising in Paris, in which the Emperor was made to dance with the Pope and the French king, while the King of England sat on a high bench and looked on. And when it was asked, why he danced not? it was answered, that he sat there *but to pay the minstrels' wages only*: as if they should say, we paid the piper for all men's dancing."

cause he is not the most ready to speak and solicit his own cause. At your manor of Hampton Court, the 24th day of August, by your most humble chaplain

(Superscribed)

T. CAR¹¹ EBOR.

To the King's most noble Grace, Defender of the Faith.

In a reply from More to the cardinal, of the 26th, we have the following pleasing acknowledgment of the same.

“Furthermore, it may like your good Grace to understand, that, at the contemplation of your Grace's letters, the king's Highness is graciously content, that, besides the hundred pounds for my fee for the office of Speaker of his Parliament, to be taken at the receipt of his Exchequer, I shall have one other hundred pounds out of his coffers, by the hands of the treasurer of his chamber. Wherefore, in most humble wise, I beseech your good Grace, that, as your gracious favour hath obtained it for me, so it may like the same to write to Mr. Wyatt, that he may deliver it to such as I shall send for it: whereby, I and all men, as the manifold goodness of your Grace hath already bound us, shall be daily more and more bounden to pray for your Grace, whom our Lord long preserve in honour and health. At Easthamstead, the 26th day of August.” (*State Papers*, vol. i. 127.)

As our subject has now brought More in contact with one of the most remarkable men of his age, the reader will naturally look for some particulars respecting him. The portrait of Cardinal Wolsey, as sketched by the rapid and graphic pencil of Lloyd, is so true to the life, that we cannot better terminate the present chapter than by presenting it to the reader:—

“Wolsey made the first essay of his powers in commanding over noblemen, in the Earl of Dorset's

family, as a school-master. The first step to greatness in a scholar, is relation to a nobleman; the best education for the court, is in the palace. Nature had made him capable, the school and university made him a scholar, but his noble employment made him a man. At Oxford, he read books; at my lord's he read men, and observed things. The two parsonages bestowed upon him by his patron, were not so valuable to him as the excellent principles instilled into him; he being not more careful to instruct the young men, than their noble father to tutor him: his bounty made him rich, and his recommendation potent. Bishop Fox was secretary to King Henry VII., and Wolsey to Bishop Fox; the one was not a greater favourite of the king than the other, as one brought him a head capacious of all observations, and a spirit above all difficulties. Others managed the affairs of England, Wolsey understood its interests. His correspondence was active abroad; his observations close, deep, and unremitting at home. He improved what he knew, and bought what he knew not. He could make any thing he read or heard his own, and could improve anything that was his own to the uttermost.

"No sooner was he *in* with the Bishop of Winchester, than the Bishop was *out* with the Earl of Surrey; to whom he must have stooped, as he did to nature and art, had he not raised his servant equal to himself in the king's favour, and above Howard. By the canons he was forbid heirs of his body; by his prudence he was enjoined to make an heir of his favour, equally to support and comfort his old age, and maintain his interest. Children in point of policy, as in point of nature, are a blessing, and as arrows in the hand of the mighty; and happy is that old courtier, who hath his quiver full of them: he shall not be ashamed when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. The old man commends Wolsey to Henry VII., as one fit to serve a king and com-

mand others. Foreign employment is the statesman's first school; to France, therefore, is he sent, to poise his English gravity with the French *debonnaire*: a well-poised quickness is the excellent temper. From foreign employments under an old king, he came home to some domestic services under the young one: as quickly as he found the length of his foot, did he fit him with an easy shoe. The king followed his pleasures, and the minister enjoyed his power. The one pursued his sports, while youth, the other his business, while time served him. 'Give me to-day, and take thou to-morrow,' is the language as well of the courtier as the Christian. The favourite took in the debates of the council and other state affairs in the bulk, by day; and the king had the quintessence of them extracted, and presented to him at night. All state business was disposed of by him, and most church preferments bestowed upon him: the bishoprics of Durham, Winchester, and York, were in his possession, and all other promotions in his gift. He was installed in the kingdom during King Henry's youth, and had the church in *commendam*. His great services, indeed, could not be managed, nor his greater power supported, without a great revenue; but his interest went far, and his money farther, and he could buy off expedients as readily as his greatness could command them. He had two rivals, the Duke of Buckingham and the Duke of Suffolk: the former he despised as rather beside, than against him; he being the king's companion in pleasure, and Wolsey his counsellor in policy; the duke great with young Henry, the bishop with the king. Buckingham he feared, as popular, and undermined, as proud: that tower must fall, whose foundation is hollow. Buckingham was high in birth, honour, and estate; Wolsey higher in prudence. The minister's malice did the brave duke much mischief, and his own folly more: vain glory ever lieth at an open guard, and gives much advantage

of play to her enemy. A king is jealous, and a weak nobleman ambitious. In fine, he is attainted of treason (though rival to the king in his clothes, rather than his crown, in his vanities than his authority): but a cunning upstart will quickly blow off a young nobleman's cap and feather, and his head too, when it stands in the way. His power against Buckingham, was his shield against all others. One defence well managed, one adversary thoroughly suppressed, is a security at court, where two men seldom fall the same way.

"Many envied the archbishop, the cardinal, the legate *de latere*, the Lord Chancellor: but all feared the favourite. Most were discontented, but none durst shake their heads, lest they should fall off as Buckingham's had done. He was too proud to be bribed, and too powerful to be overborne.

"But England was too narrow a theatre for this great spirit, and he aspires to Rome: and having been these many years Pope of this other world, would have been of that beyond the waters. This leap was great from York to Rome, and his rise for the leap as good; Charles V. was his client, and his master's servant; the cardinals were his pensioners: and when they failed (as he is no fox, whose den hath but one hole, and he no statesman, who, when one way is stopped, cuts not out another,) he falls off from the German Emperor to the French King, with whom, if he would not carry his own design, he would hinder the emperor's—and revenge is an advancement. So great was he, that his influence balanced Europe, overawed emperors, threatened kings, and was fatal to queens: if he cannot be Pope of Rome, he will show he is as good as King of England. Finding that the king wanted a meet yoke-fellow, and a lawful heir male to his crown; and observing Queen Catherine's age above her husband's, and her gravity above her age, being more pious than pleasant, a better woman than wife, and a better wife

for any prince, than for King Henry; upon some scruple, intimated by the Spaniard some years before, which others had forgot, but the cardinal kept laid up, he promotes a divorce between the king and queen. Nor was this all; knowing that King Henry would not have the woman to his mind, till he had a Pope of his own choosing, he would help him to a young wife, but he must raise him to a new power; Wolsey must be Pope, or King Henry could not be divorced. And to make all sure, no sooner was he parted from a daughter of Spain, than he was to be joined to a Princess of France, whose nuptial ring was to wed King Henry to her, and King Francis to himself.

“ Missing of power, he meditates honour; and instead of lavishing his infinite treasure upon airy expectations, he bestoweth it in real monuments, which make his memory as renowned, as was his life. That statesman lives to little purpose, whose actions are as short as his life, and whose exploits are of no longer duration than the age in which he lives.

“ While the king bore the sword of state, the cardinal wielded it over all the land, in his quality of legate; by virtue whereof he visited all churches and religious houses, even the Friars’ observants themselves, notwithstanding the stoutness and stubbornness with which they first opposed him. Papal and royal power met in him, being Chancellor of the land, and keeping so many bishoprics in *commendam*, that his yearly income is said to have equalled that of the crown. He gave the first blow to religious houses, by making one great college out of forty small monasteries. Besides sending him on many splendid embassies, the king gave him many estates and magnificent palaces; fitting his humour with pleasant habitations and soothing his ambition with power and authority.

“ But his sovereign broke with him at last about

the divorce, being vexed with so many delays and prorogations between two popes, Clement that was, and Wolsey that would be. Yet he rather eased him of his burthens, than deprived him of his preferments; continuing him Bishop of York and Durham, after dismissing him from the Chancellorship. Here he lived rather like a prince than a priest, providing as magnificently for his installation, as a king should for his coronation. This unreasonable ambition was improved by his enemy's malice, and the king's jealousy to his ruin. In the midst of his solemnities he is arrested by the king's order, whose wrath was the messenger of death: and on his way to London, being distracted between hope and fear, he died at Leicester, breathing out his soul in words to this purpose: 'Had I served the God of heaven, as faithfully as I have my master on earth, he would not thus have forsaken me in my old age.' Too sudden prosperity in the beginning, undoeth us in the end; while we expect the same flow of fortune, we remit our care, and perish by our neglect. Ambition reaches too high, and loses its proper support—humility; for the broader the base, the higher and stronger the pyramid. *Ego et rex meus* was good grammar for Wolsey the schoolmaster, but not for the cardinal and the statesman. Wolsey is famous for two things—that he never spoke a word too much, and but one too little."—*Lloyd's Worthies*, p. 46, 1650.

At the period of More's history to which we have arrived, Wolsey had reached the highest pinnacle of power and glory to which a subject could aspire, and infinitely beyond that to which any subject in England had before attained. He was Archbishop of York, Bishop of Durham, Abbot of St. Alban's, Cardinal Legate *a latere* for life, Lord Chancellor of England, Prime Minister, Lord Keeper of the privy purse to the king, and Grand Almoner to the queen. And yet there was a still higher honour to which he

had long aspired, and which would have placed him on a level with the potentates of the earth. But this very year witnessed his disappointment; on the 19th of November, 1524, his rival, Julio de Medici, was elected to the Popedom, by the unanimous voices of the conclave, under the title of Clement the Seventh. Desirous to secure the faith and affection of the English king, he early despatched an ambassador to London, who was the bearer of a magnificent present, which the chroniclers vie with one another in describing. It was a consecrated rose, sent as a token to the king, and delivered to him after a solemn mass sung by the cardinal, on the festival of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. It is described as a tree of fair gold, wrought with branches, leaves, and flowers, in imitation of roses. It grew in a pot of gold, having gold dust instead of earth, and was supported on an antique tripod of classic workmanship. The top rose was encircled by a sparkling sapphire loop, and the tree itself was about half a yard in height, and a foot in breadth. Fond as Henry was of magnificence, he was greatly flattered by this present—a feeling which was increased by the pope's sending him a confirmation of his title of Defender of the Faith. To Wolsey was sent a valuable ring, which the pontiff took from his own hand, regretting that he could not himself have the satisfaction of placing it on the finger of his eminence.

When we consider these demonstrations of extreme cordiality and affection, and also take into account the jealousy with which the cardinal and his royal master regarded the progress of Luther's opinions, which about this time had begun to infect the universities, and make an impression upon the people, nothing could appear more improbable, as far as human calculation is concerned, than that sudden and extraordinary revolution, which was so soon to change the destinies of England.

CHAPTER V.

1525—1529. *ÆTAT.* 50.

THE DIVORCE—THE MISSION TO FRANCE—MORE
AS A CONTROVERSIALIST—THE SWEATING SICK-
NESS—EMBASSY TO THE NETHERLANDS.

Origin and progress of the Divorce—More appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—Wolsey's mission to France, the secret object of which is the promotion of the divorce—More accompanies Wolsey in his journey—Description of the cavalcade and the cardinal's magnificence—His interview with Archbishop Warham and Bishop Fisher—His reception at Canterbury—His instructions to his attendants on reaching Calais—His reception at Amlens by Francis the First—More and the rest of the suite introduced to the royal party—More returns with Wolsey to London—Devotes himself to controversy—His motives for so doing—Refutation of Tindall—Anecdotes—England visited by the Sweating Sickness—Its salutary effect upon the mind of the king—Anne Boleyn is sent from the court—The cardinal makes his will—Henry follows his example—The sickness attacks the family of More—His daughter Margaret in danger, and restored by the prayers of her father—The sickness ceases—Anne recalled to court—More proceeds on an embassy to the Netherlands—Anecdote—Family disaster on More's return—His letter to his wife on the occasion.

As More's future history is closely connected with that disgraceful page in the English annals, the divorce of Henry the Eighth, it will, in passing, be necessary to glance at its progress. With the full and masterly exposure of this revolting affair in the pages of Dr. Lingard, the reader is no doubt familiar; it is a subject on which he has displayed

even more than his ordinary keenness of research. We shall content ourselves with a simple reference to documents, and particularly to the new and interesting materials afforded by the publication of the "State Papers."

"Henry's licentious passions," we quote Sir J. Mackintosh, "by a singular operation, recalled his mind to his theological studies, and especially to the question relating to the papal power of dispensing with the Levitical law, which must have been the subject of conversation at the time of his unusual, if not unprecedented, espousal of his brother's widow. Scruples, at which he had once cursorily glanced as themes of discussion, now borrowed life and warmth from his passions. In the course of examining the question, his assent was likely at last to be allured into the service of desire. The question was, in itself, easily disputable: it was one on which honest and skilful men differed; and it presented, to say the least, ample scope for self-delusion. His nature was more depraved than lawless (if that word may be so used); and it is possible that his passion might have yielded to other obstacles, if he had not at length persuaded himself, that, by means of a divorce, his gratification might be reconciled with the letter of the law. His conduct has the marks of that union of confidence and formality often observed in men, whose immorality receives treacherous aid from a mistaken conscience."

Henry was aware that some objections had been formerly raised to his marriage with Catharine: but the question had been set at rest by the unanimous decision of his council; and nearly twenty years had elapsed without a suspicion of the lawfulness of their union. But, all of a sudden, the king was induced to re-consider this subject; a scruple of conscience came over the royal mind; it was frightful to think that he *might* be living in a state of incest

with the relict of his brother.* Tremblingly alive to these delicate apprehensions, he opened his heart to Wolsey and others, from whom he was sure of receiving sound and wholesome advice. But does not the most unsuspicious of readers feel inclined to wonder at this sudden change in the royal mind? and to think it no sin to question the *entire* purity of Henry's motives?—The following facts may furnish him with some solution to the king's misgivings of conscience.

In the service of the queen, and acting in capacity of one of her maids of honour, was a young lady of good family, remarkable for her accomplishments, and for the beauty of her person. Anne Boleyn had resided for several years in France, and had contracted many of the fashionable graces, not to say coquettish airs, of the French capital. These allurements were destined to prove fatal to Henry's honour as a husband and to his faith as a Catholic.† The precise date of his adulterous attachment to Anne Boleyn is not well ascertained; but the following items will serve as tolerably correct data.

In 1525, when she filled the situation of one of the maids of honour to Queen Catharine, Percy, son to the Earl of Northumberland, made her an offer of marriage, and was received as a suitor. Wolsey was ordered to separate the lovers; and Northumberland, having severely chided the presumption of his son, compelled him to marry Mary, a daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury. This was probably the first hint that Anne received of the impression she had made on the king's heart: a valuable present of

* O my Wolsey,
Would it not grieve a husband's heart to leave
So virtuous a spouse? But, conscience, conscience!—
O, 'tis a tender place! and—I must leave her.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Henry VIII.*

† It seems the marriage with his brother's wife
Has crept too near his conscience.—No, his conscience
Has crept too near another lady.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Henry VIII.*

jewels revealed to her more fully the influence of her charms, to which she might also attribute the elevation of her father to the rank of Viscount Rochford.* There also passed an active correspondence between the virtuous damsel and her married lover, and the admirers of such reading have lately been entertained by their publication.†

Wolsey's ruling passion was state-intrigue, and his eye was immediately turned to the political consequences that would follow a divorce. Catharine once out of the way, he might bring about an alliance between Henry and the daughter of the French king, and this would favour the great object of his ambition, the elevation to the papal throne. Imagine, therefore, his vexation and disappointment, when the astounding fact came to his knowledge of Henry's passion for Anne. He saw at a glance the power which the Boleyns and their connection would acquire by the elevation of their young and beautiful relative. He threw himself on his knees before the king, and earnestly entreated him to desist from a purpose so unworthy of his birth. But a few mo-

* In Nicholas's "Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII." are found the following curious entries of presents from the monarch to his mistress.

1528. Purple velvet, and stuff for the use of Anne Boleyn. In December of the same year, 180*l.* in money—no trifle at that period.

1529. In April, her servant receives a recompense for finding a hare; and, in May, the tailor and skinner are paid for her dresses. Another entry mentions bows and arrows purchased for her. In November, twenty yards of crimson satin are sent her; in December eight guineas for badger-skins, or furs; on the 21st of the same month, twenty shillings in silver: the following day, fine linen for her person, accompanied by five pounds. On the 23d, five pounds more; on the 30th one hundred pounds as a new year's gift, &c.

† It is a curious fact, that the autographs of these letters found their way to Rome, where they are still preserved among the MSS. of the Vatican. They were transcribed a few years since, and published in a number of the "Pamphleteer." A learned historian, the professed admirer and apologist of Henry VIII., has commented on these letters with a gravity, that singularly contrasts with the revolting character of the subject. His devotion to the royal writer blinds him altogether to those indelicacies in these letters which have shocked the sensibilities of Dr. Lingard and others.—See Sharon TURNER's *Hist. of Henry VIII.*

ments' reflection upon the temper of his impetuous master, made him hasten to atone for the indiscretion into which he had suffered himself to be betrayed. He at once became a convert to a measure which he could not avert, and laboured by redoubled activity and zeal, to atone for the crime of having dared to dispute the pleasure of his sovereign.

Knowing that More had given much of his attention to theological studies, it is natural to conjecture that the king would be anxious for his opinion on his "secret matter," as it was termed. The first revealings of this affair made to Sir Thomas are found in one of his letters to Cromwell. We will quote a part:

"Upon a time, at my coming from beyond sea [from the embassy to the Netherlands], I repaired, as my duty was, to the king's grace, who was at that time at Hampton Court. While walking in the gallery with me, his highness suddenly brake with me on his great matter; and showed me, that it was now perceived, that his marriage was not only against the positive laws of the church and the written law of God, but also so far against the law of nature, that it could in no wise by the church be dispensable.* Now so it was, that before my going over the sea, I had heard certain things moved against the bull of the dispensation, concerning the words in the Levitical law to prove the prohibition to be *de jure divino*. But yet, I thought at that time, that the greater hope of the matter stood in certain faults which were found in the bull, whereby the bull could not by law be sufficient. And such comfort was there in that point (as far as I perceived,) for a good season, that the counsel on the other side were fain to bring forth a brief, by which they pretended those defaults to be supplied. The truth of which brief

* Cresacre tells us that a Dr. Stokely "found out this quirk," which proved a profitable one to him, as Henry afterwards gave him the bishopric of London.

was by the king's counsel suspected, and much diligence was afterwards used for the trial of that point. Wherein what was finally found, either I never knew, or else I remember not.

"I rehearse you this, to the intent you should know, that the first time I ever heard that point moved, was, as I began to tell you, when the king's grace laid the Bible open before me, and read the words which moved his highness and divers other erudite persons so to think; and he asked me farther, what I myself thought thereon. At which time, not presuming to think that his highness would take that point as proved to my poor mind, in so great a matter, I nevertheless showed, as my duty was at his command, what I thought upon the words which I then read. Whereupon his highness accepting benignly my sudden unadvised answer, commanded me to commune further with Bishop Fox, now his grace's almoner, and to read with him a book which then was in making on that matter.

"After which book read, and my poor opinion declared unto his highness thereon, like a prudent prince he assembled a good number of very well learned men at Hampton Court. I heard that they agreed upon a certain form in which the book should be made, which was afterwards read at York-place, in my lord Cardinal's chamber, in presence of diverse bishops, and many learned men."

Towards the close of this year died Sir Richard Wingfield, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, an important appointment under the crown; and the king, without any solicitation, bestowed the vacant office upon Sir Thomas.

1527. In the summer of this year, Wolsey proceeded on his magnificent embassy to France, in which More and other officers of state were joined with him. The ostensible purpose of this mission was to conclude a treaty for the deliverance of Pope Clement VII. from captivity, and his restoration to

the possessions of the church ; but the secret object was to pave the way for the divorce. More, fortunately for him, was not made the depositary of this state secret.

Both Wolsey in his letters to the king, and his faithful secretary Cavendish, have left us journals of this mission. We shall select from them such items as will interest the reader, both as presenting pictures of the manners of the age, and as enabling him to trace the progress of that question which involves so much of moment—the divorce.

June 18. In the instructions given by the king to Wolsey relative to the mission, not a hint is dropped respecting the secret object of the journey. But we learn from a letter of Wolsey in reply to a message from the king, that something has transpired relative to the “secret matter,” and that Henry suspects Wolsey of disaffection, or, at all events, of indiscretion in regard to this delicate affair.* It is to be regretted that the letter is in a mutilated state ; we will quote a part. “The message sent unto me this morning (July 1st) hath not a little troubled my mind, considering that your Highness should think or conjecture upon such message as I sent unto your Highness by Master Sampson, that I should either doubt, or should abate in my zeal for your secret matter. For I take God to record, that there is nothing earthly that I covet so much, as the advancing thereof ; not doubting, for anything that I have heard in regard that this overture hath come to the queen’s knowledge . . . than I have done before ; and when he showed me that the queen was very stiff and obstinate ; and that she desired counsel as well of your subjects as of strangers, I said this device could

* Εἰσὶ γὰρ πῶς τοῦτο τῇ τυραννίδι
Νόσημα, τοῖς φίλοις μὴ πισυνθῆναι.

ÆSCHYLUS, *Prometheus*.

’Tis a foul canker inbred in the heart
Of tyrants, to mistrust the friends who serve them. W.

never come of her, but of some that were learned; and these were the worst points that could be imagined, for the *impeaching* [hindering] of the matter: for... that she could resort to the counsel of strangers, or... she intended to make counsel of all the world, France except, as a party against it; wherefore, I think it convenient, till it were known what should succeed of the pope, and to what point the French king might be brought, your Grace should handle her both gently and doucelly. At the reverence of God, sire, and most humbly prostrate at your feet, I beseech your Grace, whatsoever report shall be made unto the same, to conceive no opinion of me, but that in this matter, and in all other things that may touch your honour and surety, I shall be as constant as any living creature; not *letting* [relinquishing] for any danger, obloquy, displeasure, or persecution; yea, if all fail and swerve, your Highness shall find me fast and constant, according to my most bounden duty; praying our Lord to preserve your most noble and royal estate, giving unto the same the accomplishment of your desires, to the attaining whereof I shall strike with your Highness *usque ad mortem*. At my palace beside Westminster, the first day of July, by your most humble chaplain.

“ T. CAR^{lis} EBOR.”

July 3d. Cavendish thus describes the first movements of the journey. “ Then marched my lord cardinal forward out of his house at Westminster, passing through all London, over London Bridge, having before him of gentlemen a great number, three in a rank, in black velvet livery coats, and the most part of them with great chains of gold about their necks. And all his yeomen, with noblemen’s and gentlemen’s servants followed him, in French tawny livery coats; having embroidered upon the backs and breasts of the said coats these letters, T. and

C., under the cardinal's hat. His sumpter-mules, which were twenty in number and more, with the carts and other carriages of his train, were passed on before, conducted and guarded with a great number of bows and spears. He rode like a cardinal, very sumptuously, on a mule trapped with crimson velvet upon velvet, and his stirrups of copper and gilt; and his spare mule following him with like apparel,* and before him he had his two great crosses of silver, two great pillars of silver, the great seal of England, his cardinal's hat, and a gentleman that carried his vallaunce (otherwise called a cloak bag), which was made altogether of fine scarlet cloth of gold, very richly, having therein a cloak of fine scarlet. Thus passed he through London, and all the way on his journey, having his harbingers passing before, to provide lodging for his train."

The cavalcade halted the first night at Sir John Wiltshire's, two miles beyond Dartford. Wolsey states in his letter to the king, written from that place, that "he had met there my Lord of Canterbury (Warham); with whom after communication had of your secret matter, and such other things as have been hitherto done therein, I showed him how the knowledge thereof is come to the queen's grace, and how displeasantly she taketh it, and what your highness had done for the staying and pacification of her; declaring unto her, that your grace had hitherto nothing intended nor done, but only for the searching and trying out of the truth, proceeding upon occasion given by the French party, and doubts moved therein by the Bishop of Tarbes.† Which fashion liked my

* It was the usage of the age for the dignitaries of the church to ride on mules, it being esteemed unbecoming to ride on horseback, when their Lord and Master rode on the foal of an ass. Old Beraldus (*De Superbia*) thus quaintly expresses himself on this subject, "Christus nunquam equitavit, tantum semel asinavit; atque adeo neque mulavit, neque palafedavit, neque dromedariavit."

† Gabriel de Grammont, Bishop of Tarbes, was one of those who came on an embassy from France, in the spring of 1527. The much agitated question is here settled as to the quarter in which the king's doubts originated.

Lord of Canterbury very well. And noting his countenance, gesture, and manner,* although he somewhat marvelled how the queen should come to the knowledge thereof, and by whom; thinking that your grace might constrain and cause her to show the discoverers thereof to your highness; yet, as I perceive, he is not much altered or turned from his first faction; expressly affirming that, however displeasingly the queen took this matter, yet the truth and judgment of the law must have place and be followed. And so proceeding farther with him in communication, I have sufficiently instructed him, how he shall order himself in case the queen do demand his counsel in the said matter; which mine advertisement he doth not only like, but also hath promised me to follow the same accordingly."

On Thursday night Wolsey came to Rochester, "where," he continues, "I was lodged in the Bishop's [Fisher] palace, and was right lovingly and kindly by him entertained. After other communication, I asked him whether he had heard lately any tidings from the court, and whether any man had been sent unto him from the queen's grace. At which question he somewhat stayed and paused; nevertheless, in conclusion, he answered; true it is, that of late one was sent to him from the queen's grace, who brought him a message only by mouth, without disclosure of any particularity, that certain matters there were between your grace and her chanced, wherein she would be glad to have his counsel, alleging that your highness was content she should so have. Whereunto, as he saith, he made answer, likewise by mouth, that he was ready and prone to give unto her his counsel in any thing that concerned or touched herself only, but in matters concerning your highness, here he would nothing do, without knowledge of your pleasure and express com-

* We here see Wolsey acting the not very honourable part of an inquisitor, and that too under the hospitable roof of his friend who entertained him.

mandment; and herewith dismissed the messenger. After declaration whereof, I replied and said, 'My lord, ye and I have been of an old acquaintance, and the one hath loved and trusted the other; wherefore, postponing all doubt and fear, ye may be frank and plain with me, like as I, for my part, will be with you.' And so I demanded of him, whether he had any special knowledge or conjecture what the matter should be, wherein the queen desired to hear his advice. Whereupon he answered, that by certain report and relation he knew nothing; howbeit, upon conjecture, rising upon such things as he had heard, he thinketh it was for a divorce between your highness and the queen, to which conjecture he was specially moved upon a tale brought unto him by his brother from London; who showed him, that being there, in a certain company, he heard say that things were set forth, sounding to such a purpose; whereupon and then, calling to remembrance the question I moved unto him by your grace's commandment, with the message sent unto him from the queen, he verily supposed such a matter to be in hand; and this was all he knoweth therein, as he constantly affirmeth, without that ever he sent any word or knowledge thereof, by his faith, to the queen's grace, or any other living person. Upon this occasion, I said unto him, that although for such considerations, as in further hearing of the matter he shall perceive, your highness was minded not to disclose the same to many, but as secretly to handle it as might be, and therefore did communicate it unto very few; yet now, perceiving your good mind and gracious intent to be otherwise taken by suspicions and conjectures than was purposed; your highness had given me special charge and commission to disclose the same unto him; taking an oath of him to keep it close and secret, and to show his mind and opinion what he thought therein. After which oath taken,' &c. Wolsey then proceeds to speak of other matters, but again

reverts to this subject, as follows : " And thus declaring the whole matter to him at length, as was devised with your highness at York Place, I added that, by what means was not reprehended, an inkling of this matter is come to the queen's knowledge; who, being suspicious, and casting farther doubts than were meant or intended, hath broken with your grace thereof, after a very displeasing manner; saying that, by my procurement and setting forth, a divorce was purposed between her and your highness; and by her manner, behaviour, words, and messages sent to diverse, hath published, divulged, and opened the same; and what your highness hath said unto her therein, to the purging of the matter, how and after what sort your grace has used yourself to attain to the knowledge of him that should be author of that tale unto her. And I assure your grace, my Lord of Rochester, hearing the process of the matter after this sort, did arrest great blame unto the queen, as well for giving too light credence in so weighty a matter, as also, when she heard it, to handle the same in such fashion as rumour and bruit should speed thereof, which might not only be some stay and let to the universal peace which is now in treaty, but also to the great danger and peril of your grace's succession, if the same should be farther spread and divulged; and he doubted not, but that if he might speak with her, and disclose unto her all the circumstances of the matter as afore, he should cause her greatly to repent, humble, and submit herself unto your highness; considering that the thing done by your grace in this matter was too necessary and expedient, and the queen's act herein so perilous and dangerous. Howbeit, I have so persuaded him, that he will nothing speak or do therein, nor any thing counsel her, but as shall stand with your pleasure; for he saith, although she be queen of this realm, yet he acknowledgeth you for his high sovereign lord and king; and will not, thereupon, otherwise behave

himself, in all matters, concerning or touching your person, than as he shall be by your grace expressly commanded."*

"On Saturday he reached Canterbury, where he was encountered by the worshipfullest of the town and country, and lodged in the abbey of Christ-church, in the prior's lodging. Here he continued three or four days;† in which time there was the great jubilee, and a fair in honour of the feast of St. Thomas, their patron. On which day of the said feast there was made a solemn procession in the abbey; and my lord cardinal went there, apparelled in his legantine ornaments, with his cardinal's hat on; who commanded the monks and all the choir to sing the Litany after this sort, *Sancta Maria ora pro Papa nostro Clemente*,‡ and thus they sang through the Litany, my lord Cardinal kneeling at the choir-door, at a form covered with carpets and cushions, the monks and all the choir standing all the while in the midst of the body of the church. At which time I saw the lord Cardinal weep very tenderly; which was, as we supposed, for heaviness of heart that the Pope was, at that time, in such calamity and great danger of the Lance Knights," [the German mercenaries, who were so denominated].

On landing in Calais, Wolsey made an address to his followers, in which occurs the following very

* "The overbearing deportment of Wolsey probably overawed these good prelates. Wolsey understood them in the manner most suitable to his purpose; and, confident that he should by some means finally gain them, he probably coloured very highly their language in his communication to Heary, whom he had just before displeased by unexpected scruples."—*Sir J. Mackintosh*.

† A letter from Wm. Knight, dated Windsor, 9th of July, after stating that the king accepts very thankfully the overture made to the Lords of Canterbury and Rochester, adds: "And forasmuch as in your journey yeshall not, by chance, have always venison after your appetite, his highness hath sent unto your grace at this time a red deer, by a servant of his own; and that, not because it is a deer excellent, but forasmuch as it is, at this time, a novelty and dainty, and more-over killed by his own hand."

‡ His Holiness was at this time a prisoner in the castle of St. Angelo, after the sacking of the city.

whimsical piece of advice. "Now, to the point of the Frenchmen's nature: ye shall understand that their disposition is such, that, at the first meeting, they will be as familiar with you as if they had been acquainted with you long before, and commence with you in the French tongue, as though ye understood every word they spake: therefore, in like manner, be ye as familiar with them again as they be with you. If they speak to you in the French tongue, speak you to them in the English tongue; for if you understand not them, no more shall they understand you." And here my lord spake merrily to one of the gentlemen, being a Welshman: "Rice," quoth he, "speak thou Welsh to him, and I am well assured that thy Welsh shall not be more difficult to him, than his French shall be to thee."

August 3. He reaches Amiens: "within a mile and a half of which," says Wolsey, "the French king, riding upon a grey genet, apparelled in a coat of black velvet, cut in diverse places for showing the lining, which was white satin, accompanied by the King of Navarre, the Cardinal Bourbon, the Duke of Vendôme, the Count de St. Pol, the Duke of Guise, the Count de Vaudemont, the Grand Master, and the Seneschal of Normandy, with diverse archbishops, bishops, and other noblemen, advanced towards me. As soon as I had a sight of his person, dividing my company on both hands, in most reverent manner, sole and alone, I did accelerate my repair and access; and his Grace doing the like on his part, being uncovered, with his bonnet in his hand, encountered me with most hearty, kind, loving countenance and manner, and embraced me, presenting me to the aforesaid noble personages, by whom I was likewise welcomed: in the time of doing whereof, the French King saluted my Lord of London [Cuthbert Tunstal]; my lord chamberlain [Lord Sandys], master controller [Sir Henry Guilford,] and the chancellor of the duchy [Sir Thomas More]. After

which salutations on both sides, the French king with loving and joyous countenance, most heartily demanded of your Highness' welfare and prosperity, to hear of which was to his great consolation and comfort. And so, passing together by the way, placing me, albeit I refused the same, on his left hand, he was glad to find occasion to talk of your Highness' virtuous personage, excellent qualities, and pastime. And to the intent, as me seemed, that he greatly esteemed all such things as were sent by your Highness to him, he caused the Count St. Pol, Monsieur de Guise, and Monsieur de Vaudemont, to ride next before him three of the horses that your Highness had sent him; whereof the one being a bay, he said was the best, the highest and the most meet for the war, of any to be found in Christendom. And then as we passed through the city, which was marvellously replenished with people, crying Vive le Roy, he forgot not, far above my deserts, to recognize how much his mother and realm were bounden unto me. And because he knew (so it pleased him to say), that your Highness used me in all your affairs, as your chief counsellor, he from henceforth should do the same; assuring me that whatever I should think to be done, he would follow, taking and reputed me from the time forward as his chancellor and minister. After demand whether I would see the Queen that night, whereof I showed myself to be very glad, I departed from him, and by the cardinal of Lorraine was accompanied to my lodgings, which I found richly apparelled with the king's own stuff. The centre chamber with rich cloth of tissue and silver embroidered, wherein was a large cloth of state of the same stuff. The second chamber was apparelled with crimson velvet embroidered, and replenished with large letters of gold F and A, crowned with another very large cloth of state of fine arras. The third chamber, being my bed chamber, was apparelled with rich cloth of tissue, raised,

and a great *sparver* and counterpoint to the same; and the fourth, being as a closet, was hanged with cloth of bawdikin, whereto was annexed a little gallery, hanged with crimson velvet.*

"And after a little pause, and shifting myself, the Cardinal of Bourbon, the Duke of Vendôme, and other prelates and noblemen, came to conduct me to my Lady's presence; who was lodged in the Bishop's palace; in the hall whereof, which was large and spacious, richly hung with arras, were placed in good order, on both sides, the French king's guard, my Lady his mother, the Queen of Navarre, Madame Regnet, the Duchess of Vendôme, the King of Navarre's sister, with a great number of ladies and gentlemen. My Lady, as I approached, advanced in most loving and pleasant manner, and welcomed, and embraced me, and likewise saluted my Lord of London, my Lord Chamberlain, Master Controller, and the Chancellor of the Duchy, and more especially the Earl of Derby, whom it liked her Grace to kiss, and right lovingly to welcome. Which done, the Lady taking me by the arm conveyed me to her inner chamber, where, under a rich cloth of state were set two chairs garnished, one with black velvet and the other with cloth of tissue. After delivery and reading of your grace's letters, which seemed to be very pleasant to her, and making cordial recommendations to your grace, demanding of your welfare and prosperity, her pleasure was that we should sit down and enter into further communication. I stayed till eight of the clock, when, as my Lady had not supped, I took my leave and returned to my lodgings, accompanied by the aforesaid Cardinal of Bourbon, and the Duke of Vendôme.

"August 14th, being Our Lady's eve, there came

* Had a question arisen whether Wolsey was an upholsterer's instead of a butcher's son, one would think that the fondness shown by him for minute descriptions of furniture, ornamental hangings, &c., would have solved the doubt.

to my lodgings the Grand Master, sent by the French king, to signify to me that his Grace was minded that night to go and hear even-song in the cathedral church of our Lady, praying me, if I were *somblably minded* [of the same mind] to hear even-song in that church, to repair thither, where his Grace would meet me, and so together we should pass to such places as were prepared for that purpose. I went to the great chamber, when his Grace met me with loving countenance and manner, being uncovered, with his bonnet in his hand, and saluted me; and so passing through the church and choir, we proceeded to the high altar, where two *trepasses* [desks with cushions] were prepared, the one for the French king on the right hand, and the other for me on the left. The French king's travess was of rich cloth of tissue, being like to a square testar, with curtains of red damask, which were tucked up, so that his grace kneeling or sitting on the same might be seen by all the people. There were also in the same two chairs, covered with rich cloth of tissue; and although, after I had brought him to his said travess, I was minded to go to the place prepared for me, most humbly beseeching his Grace that I might do so, yet in no wise could I persuade him, but that his pleasure was, I should both kneel and sit with him in the same; and so, conforming myself to his command, we kneeling together, made to the Sacrament a few prayers; then without suffering me to say to him even-song, or hearing the same by such bishops and prelates as were present at his privy altar, alleging that in the morning he had heard and said his evening song, he sat down in one of the chairs, causing me to do the same in the other, notwithstanding any refusal I would make to the contrary; and in the sight of all the people, and all those officiating, he entered into conversation with me of affairs." Wolsey afterwards observes to Henry, "As yet I have forborne to make any over-

ture of your secret matter ; fearing that the disclosing thereof might cause the French king to be more slack in concluding the perpetual peace ; purposing to defer the same till I have put your affairs in sure perfection and train."

At the close of his letter of the 16th he says, " Little more now remains to be treated with the French king, unless it be the opening of your secret matter ; the disclosing whereof I purpose to defer till at the point of departing : handling the same after *such a cloudy and dark sort*, that he shall not know your Grace's utter determination and intent in that behalf, till your Highness shall see to what effect the same shall be brought." In the letter of the 19th we learn that " after dinner the king, with his Lady, and all the court, are to depart to visit certain devout places, whereto his grace had vowed pilgrimages in the time of his sickness and captivity."

More returned with Wolsey to England towards the close of September. It is to be regretted that he has left us no record of this journey ; his impressions of the new scene that here met his view would, no doubt, have been at once amusing and instructive.

After his return, More devoted his leisure to controversy. There is a letter of Bishop Tunstal to him, of this date, containing a permission for him to read heretical books, and an exhortation to imitate the great example which his royal master had set him. To this he was also encouraged by the example of his friend and correspondent, Erasmus, who, after many solicitations, had at length taken the field against Luther, in his dissertation *De Libero Arbitrio*—on Free Will. This was written in the scholar's usual tone of moderation and candour, yet it called forth a reply from the great Coryphæus of the reform, rife in ridicule and invective, entitled by opposition *De Servo Arbitrio*—On the Enslaved

Will. Provoked at a treatment so rude and unmerited, Erasmus rejoined in a tract of much point and spirit, entitled *Hyperaspistes*—The Shielded-Warrior.

More, in a treatise written some years later, gives us his reasons for entering the controversial lists, and they appear honest and satisfactory. "Some have asked, why I meddle with these matters? and say, that, being a layman, I should leave it to the clergy, not having professed the study of the Holy Scriptures. First, as touching learning: if these matters were very doubtful, and things of great question, or had been so cunningly handled by Tindall and his fellows, that they might seem matters of doubt and question, then would I, peradventure, let them alone myself, to be debated by divines and men of erudition. But, the matters being so plain and evident, and by the whole church of Christ so clearly put out of question, I should not seem to me in my right mind, and a true Christian man, to give a heretic so much authority, as to reckon me unable, in such plain points of the Christian faith, to answer him; especially, as I have gone somewhat to school myself, and bestowed as many years in study, and under as cunning masters as some of them have. Nor do I see these matters, handled in such wise by Tindall, or the best of them, but that a right mean-learned man, or almost an unlearned woman, having natural wit, and being sure and fast in the true Catholic faith, were well able to answer them. For, so help me God, I find nothing effectual among them all, but a shameless boldness and an unreasonable railing, with Scripture wrested awry, and made to minister matter to their jesting, scoffing, and outrageous ribaldry, not only against every estate here on earth, and the most religious living, but against the very saints in heaven, and the mysteries of God, and more especially those of the Holy Sacrament of the altar. In maintaining which, they fare as folks

that trust in nothing else but to weary out all the world by their importunate babblings, and overwhelm them with a weight of words. But the cause of my writing is not so much to debate and dispute these things with them, as to give those of the faith warning what mischief there is in their books. Again, seeing the king's gracious purpose in this point, and how effectually by writing he hath maintained the true Catholic faith, of which he has the honourable and well deserved title of Defender, I reckoned, that, being his unworthy chancellor, it appertained to my part and duty to follow the example of his noble grace, and, after my poor wit and learning, to oppose the malice of these pernicious books; indeed, to this do I consider myself bounden in virtue of my office and my oath, and not in reason only, but also by plain ordinance and statute. Such mischievous minds have the makers of these books, that they boast and glory when their ungracious writing bringeth any man to death: and yet they make their semblance as though they were sorry for it; and Tindall crieth out upon the prelates and on the temporal princes, and calleth them murderers and martyr-makers; dissembling that the cruel writer with his wretched books, murdereth the man himself, while he giveth him the poison of his heresies, and thereby compelleth princes, by occasion of their incurable and contagious pestilence, to punish them according to the laws, both for example, and to keep infection from others."

This passage is highly curious, as giving us Sir Thomas's religio-political profession of faith, and a view of the principles by which his public conduct was guided. What follows is altogether in his tone and manner:

"Not only do these men affirm that it is against the Gospel of Christ, that any heretic should be prosecuted and punished, and especially by bodily pain and death; but some of them say the same of

every manner of crime, theft, murder, treason, and all. And yet in Germany now, contrary to their own evangelical doctrine, these evangelicals themselves cease not to pursue and punish by all the means they may of purse, prison, bodily pain, or death, such of their brethren as vary from their sect — of which sects there are more than a man can well rehearse. And to this, at the last, be they driven themselves, contrary to their own former doctrine, because they find by experience that one sect cannot long dwell together with the other, without coming in contest, and seeking the other's ruin; in proof whereof, look at the Donatists of old in Africa, the Arians in Greece, the Hussites in Bohemia, the Wickliffites in England, and now the Lutherans in Germany, and lastly the Zuinglians; what a business they have made, what destruction and manslaughter, as partly history shows, and in part men have seen. . . . Now the purpose of my present labour is to show that these wily heresies are walking forth among us under the counterfeit visage of the true Christian faith; and, God willing, I shall so pull off their gay painted vizors, that their bare deformity may be seen. . . . But, as God is my help, I find all my labour in the writing not half so grievous and painful to me, as the tedious reading of their blasphemous books. And would to Heaven that all my labours were done, so that the remembrance of their pestilent errors were erased out of Englishmen's hearts, that their abominable books were burned up, and mine own were walked off with them, and the very name of these matters utterly put in oblivion. . . . But so many of these pestilent books are daily coming abroad, and men are so curious, weaning that these new wares will wear well, that it is necessary that the lovers of the truth should set their pens to work. The spreaders of error are always more active than the defenders of the truth; while the disciples of Christ sleep, there will always be the enemy busy to

sow the tares. Many are so wearied with sorrow and heaviness to see the world wax so wretched, that they fall into a slumber and let the wretches alone; if we would match them, we must watch, and pray, and take the pen in hand. . . But now, leaving other men to do as God may please to put into their minds, I shall, for my part, perform what I have promised, if God give me life and grace thereto. For as for leisure, that shall not, I trust, one time or other, lack to suffice for so much, and for much more too. But which, as I before said, when I have performed, I would in good faith wish that never man should need to read any word of it. As poisons will be found, so must treacle and other medicines be provided; but the very treacle were well lost, so that the poison were utterly lost too. For surely the very best way, were neither to read this, nor their books either; but rather that the unlearned should occupy themselves in better business—in prayer, good meditation, and the reading of such English books as most may nourish and increase devotion; of which kind is Bonaventure of the Life of Christ, Gerson of the Following of Christ, and the devout contemplative book of the *Scala Perfectionis*, and such others, than in learning what may be answered to heretics.”*

* It will be seen that, in the difficult literary question relative to the true author of the “Imitation,” Sir Thomas takes the side of his brother chancellor, Gerson. The last writer on this subject, the Rev. F. Dibden [1820] pronounces in favour of the same writer. The claim of Thomas à Kempis seems generally abandoned. The pious Christian who has read this work, solely with a view to his edification, will learn with surprise, that above sixty volumes, and some of them rather angry ones too, have been published concerning the identity of the author.

“There is no object,” says the Abbé de la Mennais, “which human curiosity considers as frivolous. Immense researches have been made to discover the name of a poor solitary of the 13th century. What has been the result of so long and laborious an inquiry? The solitary remains unknown, and the happy obscurity in which he passed his days, has protected his humility from our vain impatience to know every thing.”

The *Scala Perfectionis* (Ladder of Perfection) is the work of Father Hilton (1520).

The fruit of these studies shortly after appeared in the "Dialogue concerning Heresies and Matters of Religion," directed principally against the errors of Tindall; a man whom he describes as "so puffed up with pride, malice and envy, that it is more than marvel that his skin can hold together; and yet before he fell away from the faith, he was as meek and as simple a soul, as a man should have seen on a summer's day!" It is a long and laboured composition, not untinctured with the angry logic and bitter personalities which belonged to the age; and yet enlivened by numerous traits of wit, and illustrated by apposite anecdote. We must find room for a specimen or two.

Tindall.—"What am I the better for the belief of purgatory?"

More.—"In good faith, not the better of one single half-penny, while ye believe it no better than ye do. But surely if ye believe it well, ye might be both the better from purgatory, and the farther from hell."*

"You men of the new learning, as ye call it, boast that ye have taken away Hypocrisy. It may be so: but of this I am right well assured, that ye have left Impudence in its place."

Sir Thomas illustrates the vouching to falsehoods against the Catholics, by the following anecdote: "A pilgrim and his companion had come from London to York, and as travellers see strange things, the elder one declared that he had seen a bird that covered the whole of St. Paul's Church-yard with his wings. On the following day the tale changed its

Among the books of piety, of a century later, we may particularize *Austen's Devotions in the Manner of Ancient Offices*, a work remarkable for its elegance, and for the unction which it breathes throughout. It has become scarce, and a reprint, with a Memoir of its excellent Author, is intended to form one of the numbers of THE CATHOLIC FAMILY LIBRARY.

* This reply of More will not fail to remind the reader of the well-known repartee of Father O'Leary on the same subject.

phasis somewhat; he had not seen the bird, but he had heard much talk thereof. His companion, when questioned, said that he would not vouch for the truth of the tale, and that indeed he thought the thing but little credible. For his own part, he had only seen the egg which the bird laid, and which ten men could scarcely move with levers."

Speaking of the illusion of sinners, who, on their death-beds, are fain to hear the minister of religion smooth the matter over, and promise that all shall be well with them, he has this homely, but apt, comparison. "Even as a mother, with her fair words and promises, sendeth her child to school who hath slept too long in the morning, and is in fear and danger of the rod. When he weepeth and blubbereth, she promiseth him that all will be well, that it is not so late as he imagines, that his master will pardon his fault this time; till at last she sends him merry from his home, with his bread and butter in his hand, and yet he is not a whit the less waled for all that!"

The following is apt:

"My opponent would fain have all the talk to himself, and yet blames me for not sufficiently extending upon some points. It fares between him and me, as it once did between a nun and her brother. Very virtuous was this lady, and of a close order, in which she had been long, and had rarely seen her brother, who was likewise very virtuous, and had been far off at a university, where he had taken the degree of Doctor in Divinity. When he came home, he went to see his sister, as he who highly rejoiced in her virtue. So came she to the grate which they call, I trow, the *locutory*, and after the holy watch-word spoken on both sides, after the manner of the place, the one took the other by the tip of the finger, for hand could there be none thrust through the grate. And forthwith began my lady to give her brother a sermon on

the wretchedness of this world, and the frailty of the flesh, and the subtle sleights of the wicked fiend; and gave him to be sure good counsel, saving somewhat too long, how he should beware in his living, and master all his body for saving of his soul. So she went on, and yet, ere her own tale came to an end, she began somewhat to find fault with him and said: 'In good faith, brother, I do somewhat marvel that you, who have been at learning so long, and are a doctor, and so deeply read in the law of God, do not now at our meeting—seeing we meet so seldom—to me that am your sister, and a simple unlearned soul, give, in your charity, some fruitful exhortation; for I doubt not but you can say some good thing yourself.' 'By my troth, good sister,' quoth her brother, 'I cannot for yourself; for your tongue hath never ceased since we met, but has said enough for us both.' "

Another anecdote of Sir Thomas on the subject of talkative dames, may have its place here.

"There was of late a kinswoman of yours," says one of the interlocutors in the 'Dialogue on Tribulation,' "but whom I will not name; guess her as you can. Her husband took much pleasure in the society of another honest man, and visited him often; so that, at his meal-time he was frequently from home. It happened on a time that his wife and he were dining together at that neighbour's, and then she made a merry quarrel with him, for making her husband such good cheer out of doors, that she could scarcely have him at home. 'Forsooth, mistress,' quoth he, for he was a dry merry man, 'in my company nothing keepeth him but one thing; serve you him with the same, and he will never be from you.' 'What gay thing may that be?' quoth our cousin. 'Forsooth mistress,' replied he, 'your husband loveth to talk with all his heart, and when he sitteth with me, I let him have all the words.' 'All the words!' quoth the dame; 'is that all! I am content that he shall have

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all the words. He always has them at home, but then—I speak them all myself!’ ”

1528. This year the country experienced a second visitation of the disease known by the name of the sweating sickness. It first made its appearance in the preceding reign (1485), and its ravages were very fatal; but experience had discovered means for counteracting its malignity. At court, the disease made its first appearance among the female attendants of Anne Boleyn. By the king's order she was immediately conveyed to her father's seat in Kent; but she carried the infection with her, and had a narrow escape. Considering the fate that shortly awaited this wretched woman, and the serious evils of which she was to be the unhappy cause, would it be a want of charity to regard her recovery, as a misfortune to the country and to herself? Several persons, and among them some of noble birth, died in the palace of the cardinal, whose apprehensions induced him to elope from his family, and conceal the place of his retreat, at least from all but the king. Henry, also, seeing the contagion spread among the gentlemen of his privy chamber, frequently changed his residence, locked himself up from all communication with strangers, and instead of attending to his “secret matter,” joined the queen in her devotional exercises, confessing himself every day, and communicating every Sunday and festival.

The following memoranda from the State Papers of this year will not be uninteresting.

May 10. Hennage, one of the king's secretaries, in a letter to Wolsey: “Mistress Anne is very well amended, and commendeth her humbly to your grace, and thinketh long till she speak with you. And the king's highness this day hath sent you, by my servant, a buck which he killed yesterday at Eltham park.”

June 14. In a letter from the same. “This day

as the king's highness came toward even-song, my Lord Marquis of Exeter had brought from Burling two great bucks, which he presented unto his highness, and he commanded me to take the *best of them*, and send to your grace; and this day, his highness, like a gracious prince, has received his Maker, at the Fryers, which was administered to his highness by my lord of Lincoln [Dr. Longland]. News there be none, but that his highness upon Tuesday next, according to his appointment, doth remove to Waltham. Thus our Lord preserve your grace. From Greenwich this Corpus-Christi day."

July 5. In a letter dated Hampton Court, Wolsey thus addresses the king: "Most lowly and humbly prostrate at your feet, I beseech your highness, in consideration of my very true and faithful service, exhibited as well to your highness, as to this your realm, to be a good and gracious lord to my soul; and that such things as I have devised for the same and to the increase of God's honour, learning, virtuous living, and for the common weal of this your realm, by your gracious favour and assistance, may be perfected, accomplished, and absolved, according to the purport of my testament and last will made in that behalf; wherein I have had such loving remembrance of your highness, and of the great benefits by the same exhibited unto me, that I trust your highness, and all the world, shall say, that ye have not bestowed your favours and goodness upon an ingrate. And one thing (if it shall fortune the same to be the last word that I shall speak or write to your highness), I dare boldly say and affirm, that your grace hath had of me, a most loving, true, and faithful servant: and that for favour under gift, or promise of gift, at any time, I never did, or consented to do, anything that might in the least point, redound unto your dishonour or disprofit. And herein spiritually rejoicing, conforming my mind to God's pleasure, whatsoever shall chance of me, I most

humbly, and with all my heart, service, and prayer, bid your grace farewell. From your manor of Hampton Court, the 5th day of July, by your grace's most humble chaplain,

T. CAR^l EBOR.

July 9. In a letter from Hennage to Wolsey we have the king's reply:—"This morning, at seven of the clock, I delivered your grace's letters to the king's highness; wherewith I assure your grace, his highness was greatly comforted, and given unto your grace hearty thanks for the same. And glad he is to hear that your grace hath so good a heart, and that you have determined and made your will, and ordered yourself anenst God, as you have done, and as his highness had semblable [*in like manner*] done; which will he intendeth shortly to send unto your grace, wherein your grace shall perceive the trusty and hearty mind that he hath unto you, above all men living. He also desireth your grace that he may hear every second day from you, how you do; for I assure you, every morning as soon as he cometh from the queen, he asketh whether I have any thing from your grace."

August 5. Hennage to Wolsey:

"The king's highness commendeth him heartily to your grace, and sends you, by this bearer, the gréatest red deer that was killed by his grace, or any of his hunters, all this year. Yesterday his highness took marvellous great pain in hunting of the red deer, from nine of the clock in the morning to seven of the clock at night, and for all his pains-taking, he, nor any of his servants, could kill but this one, notwithstanding they hunted in four several parts. From Easthampstead, this present Sunday."

From the abodes of profligacy and courtly intrigue, to the modest chamber of More's residence at Chelsea, the transition is grateful and refreshing. The pre-

valent malady was, however, active within its walls, and had not spared to attack ONE for whose safety we feel a more than common solicitude. The life of Margaret Roper was, for a time, considered to be in danger. The aid of the most experienced physicians of the time had proved fruitless; she had fallen into a state of lethargy from which no efforts could arouse her. In this extremity, her father, "as he that most loved her, sought a remedy of this her desperate case from God." He hastened to his private chapel, "and there upon his knees and with many tears, besought Almighty God, to whom nothing was impossible, of his great goodness, if such were his blessed will, to grant his humble petition for the child he so fondly loved." The prayers of the pious father were not offered in vain. When More returned to his daughter's chamber, he found her thoroughly awakened from her lethargic state, and from that moment she began to amend. Sir Thomas was afterwards heard to say, "that, had it been the will of God at that time to have taken her to his mercy, he had made up his mind never to have meddled in any worldly matters after; such," continues Cresacre, whose account we have followed, "was his fatherly love and vehement affection to this his jewel, who, of all the rest, the most nearly expressed her father's virtues; though," continues he, with a pride of heart pardonable in the member of such a family, "the meanest of all the rest might have been matched with any of their age, whether for learning, excellent qualities, or unaffected piety, they having been brought up even from their infancy with such pious care, always enjoying virtuous example, and learned and diligent instructors."

In the meantime the absence of Anne Boleyn from court, the religious impression which the salutary visitation of the sickness had produced upon Henry's mind, and the harmony in which he now lived with

his wife,* afforded all good men a hope that he had altered his views, and abandoned his project of the divorce. But towards the close of the summer the sickness abated; and despatches were received from Gardener in Rome, announcing the departure of Cardinal Campeggio with the decretal bull. Henry's hopes revived; the old train of associations, disturbed only for a season, was revived, and Anne Boleyn recalled to the court.† She was not unaware of the dangers of absence, and of the risk she incurred in losing ground in the favour of her lover. She therefore redoubled her arts to confirm her empire over him, and aware that the influence of Wolsey was the surest ground on which to rest her hopes, she exerted every effort to secure it in her favour. Her letters to the cardinal at this juncture have reached us, and will be found perfect models of the wheedling art.

In the first she says:—"In the most humble wise that my poor heart can think, I do thank your Grace for your kind letter, and for your rich and goodly present, the which I shall never be able to deserve, without your great help, of the which I have hitherto had so great plenty, that all the days of my life I am most bound of all creatures, next to the king's grace, to love and serve your grace, of the which I beseech you never to doubt that ever I shall vary from this thought, as long as any breath is in my body. And as touching your grace's trouble with the sweating sickness, I thank our Lord that those I desired and prayed for are escaped, and that is the king and you. And as for the coming of the Legate, I desire that much; and if it be God's pleasure, I pray him to send this matter shortly to a good end: and then I trust, my Lord, to recompense part of your great

* A remarkable letter from Catharine and Henry, written jointly to the cardinal, confirms the statement in the text.—See Appendix, No. 1.

† The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;
The devil grew well—the devil a monk was he!

pains therewith. I must require you, in the meantime, to accept my good will in the stead of the power; the which must proceed heartily from you, as our Lord knoweth, whom I beseech to send you long life, with continuance of honour."

In a second letter she says:—"I do know that the great pains and trouble you have taken for me, both day and night, is never like to be recompensed on my part, but only in loving you, next to the king's grace, above all creatures living." In a third:—"I assure you, that, after this matter is brought to pass, you shall find me grateful, as I am bound in the meantime to owe you my service; and then look what thing in the world I can imagine to do you pleasure in, and you shall find me the gladdest woman in the world to do it; and next unto the king's grace, of one thing I make you full promise to be assured to have, and that is my hearty love, unfeignedly during life." The sequel will show how very religiously these warm professions were kept.

1529. In the course of this year, More was again sent to the Netherlands, on a mission of the same nature as that of the preceding year. He appears to have acquitted himself of the important charge entrusted to him in a manner that gave entire satisfaction. According to Roper,—“Sir Thomas worthily comported himself, procuring in this league far more benefits to the realm, than, at that time, was by the king and his council thought possible to be compassed;” and he proceeds to inform us that it was in consideration of those services, that when Sir Thomas was made chancellor, the Duke of Norfolk was ordered publicly to declare, how much England was indebted to him.

It is related that during More's stay in Bruges, an arrogant fellow had given out that he would answer whatever question could be proposed to him, in any art whatever. More caused to be put up—*Utrum*

*averia capta in Withernamid sint irreplegiabilia,** adding that there was a person in the retinue of the English Envoy who could maintain the thesis against him. These technicalities of the law completely posed the braggadocio, who was glad to steal off amidst the laughter of the spectators.†

On his return from Bruges, without staying to visit his family at Chelsea, he proceeded directly to the king, who, at that time, held his court at Woodstock. Here information was brought him "that part of his own dwelling-house at Chelsea, and all his barns there, full of corn, suddenly fell on fire, and were burnt, and all the corn therein, by the negligence of one of his neighbor's carts that carried the corn; and by occasion whereof diverse of his neighbors' barns were burned also." This called forth the following letter, which has fortunately been preserved, and which is strongly characteristic of the kindness of More's nature.

"MISTRESS ALICE:—In my most hearty wise I recommend me to you. And whereas I am informed by my son Heron, of the loss of our barns, and our neighbors' also, with all the corn that was therein; albeit (saving God's pleasure) it is a great pity of so much good corn lost, yet, as it hath liked Him to send us such a chance, we must, and are bounden, not only to be content, but also to be glad of his visitation. He sent us all we have lost: and since He hath, by such a chance, taken it away again, his pleasure be fulfilled. Let us never grudge thereat, but take it in good worth, and heartily thank Him, as well for adversity as prosperity. And, peradven-

* Whether cattle taken in reprisal can be replevied by the sheriff. *Withernamid* from the Saxon *wieder* back, and *neam* capture.

† I have, perhaps, some shallow spirit of judgment,
But in these nice sharp quilllets of the law,
Good faith, I am no wiser than a daw.

1st Pt. Henry VI., Act ii. s. 4.

ture, we have more cause to thank Him for our loss than for our winning; for his wisdom better seeth what is good for us, than we do ourselves. Therefore, I pray you, be of good cheer, and take all the household with you to church, and there thank God both for what he hath given us, and for that which he hath taken from us, and that for which he hath left us; which, if it please Him, he can increase when he will; and, if it please him to leave us yet less, as his pleasure be it. I pray you to make good onsearch what my poor neighbors have lost, and bid them take no thought therefore: for, if I should not have myself a spoon, there shall be no poor neighbour of mine bear loss by any chance happened in my house. I pray you be, with my children and your household, merry in God: and devise somewhat with your friends, what way were best to take for provision to be made for corn for our household, and for seed this year coming, if we think it good that we keep the ground still in our hands. And whether we think it good that we shall do so or not, yet I think it were not best suddenly thus to give it all up, and to put away our folk from our farm, till we have somewhat advised us thereon. Howbeit, if we have more now than we shall need, and which can get them other masters, ye may then discharge us of them: but I would not that any man were suddenly sent away, he wot not whither.—At my coming hither, I perceived none other than that I should have abide the king's grace: but now I shall, I think, because of his chance, get leave to come home and see you; and then we shall further devise together upon all things, what order shall be best to take. And thus, as heartily fare you well, with all our children as ye can wish! At Woodstock, the third day of September, by the hand of

THOMAS MORE."

CHAPTER VI.

1529—1532. *ÆTAT.* 53.

PROGRESS OF THE DIVORCE—WOISEY'S DISGRACE—
 MORE MADE CHANCELLOR—RISE OF CROMWELL—
 MORE RESIGNS THE CHANCELLORSHIP — LORD
 AUDLEY CHANCELLOR.

Farther proceedings on the divorce—Arrival of the Pope's legate, Cardinal Campeggio—His and Wolsey's interview with Catharine—Anne returns to court, and insists on the removal of Catharine—Obtains her wish and rules absolute at court—Opening of the Legantine commission—King and queen summoned to the court—Catharine's appeal—Dispute in one of the sittings—More's prudent reserve—Campeggio leaves—Affront offered to Wolsey—His arraignment and disgrace—His state of destitution—More is raised to the dignity of Lord Chancellor—The honours paid him, and his speech on the occasion—His reforms in the court of chancery—His mode of expediting business—Anecdotes of his chancellorship—His respect for his aged father—Is consulted by the king relative to his scruples—He evades the question—The two English universities declare in favour of the divorce—The foreign universities are divided in their opinions on the question—Rise of Cromwell—He suggests to the king the idea of making himself head of the church—The bill establishing the Supremacy—More announces to the Commons the decision of the universities—Death of More's father, and his filial affection—More feels that his official duties conflict with his conscience, and determines to resign—The king refuses for a time to accept his surrender of the seals, but at length accedes to his wish—His successor Lord Audley—Anecdotes of.

WE are now brought to one of the most interesting portions of More's history. A new scene is opened for the display of his talents, and for the triumph of his principles. On the 25th of October, 1529, the

king delivered to Sir Thomas More the great seal, at Greenwich, and raised him to the highest honour that can be conferred upon a subject—the office of Lord Chancellor. It will be necessary to trace the steps that led him to this high station, and in order to this, we must revert to the proceedings at court.

At the close of August, we have seen Anne Boleyn return to the king at Greenwich; early the October following, arrived the Cardinal Campeggio, the legate from Rome. The court-historian gives the following account of his reception: "About three of the clock in the afternoon, on the 29th day of July, the legate entered the city, and in Southwark met him all the clergy of London, with crosses, censors, and copes, and censed him with great reverence. The mayor and aldermen, and all the occupations of the city, in their best liveries, stood in the streets, and him highly honored: to whom Sir Thomas More made a brief oration in the name of the city."

Previously to the legate's arrival, a sense of decency had induced the king again to remove Anne from the court. Catharine had all along shut her eyes, as far as possible, to the king's conduct, or, at least, she cautiously suppressed her feelings:* for we find the king and her living on the same terms as if no difficulty had arisen between them. To quote the words of the Bishop of Bayonne: "To see them together, one might have thought that nothing had

* In the Memoir of Anne Boleyn, by Geo. Wyatt, a descendant of the poet, is the following anecdote: "These things being perceived by the queen, she the oftener had her (Anne) at cards with her, that the king might have the less of her company, and the lady the more excuse to be from him, and she also esteem herself more kindly used. She would, by way of entertainment, have a certain game, of which I recollect not the name, then much used, where in dealing, the king and queen meeting they stop; and the young lady's hap was much to stop at the king. The queen, noting this, said to her playfully; "My Lady Anne, you have good hap to stop at a king; but you are like others, you will have all or none."

Many a thing said in jest, is realized in earnest.

occurred; and to this hour (16th October, 1528) they have but one bed and one table. The people are in her favour, and declare, that, let the king marry whom he pleases, the husband of the Princess Mary shall be successor to the throne."

After the usual introduction, Campeggio waited on the queen, first in private, and then in the company of Wolsey, and four other prelates. Cavendish has described this scene with his usual fidelity.

"When Catharine was informed that they awaited her in her presence chamber, she rose from her favourite occupation of needle-work, and hastening into the apartment where they stood with a skein of silk about her neck, exclaimed—'Alack! my lords, sorry am I to make you wait: what is your pleasure with me?' 'If it please your grace,' said Wolsey, 'to go into your privy chamber, we will show you the cause of our coming.' 'My lord,' answered the queen, 'if you have anything to say, speak it openly before all these folks; for I fear nothing you can say or allege against me, but that I would all the world should hear and see it: therefore, I pray you, speak your minds openly.' The cardinal then began to address her in Latin: 'Nay, good my lord,' interrupted Catharine, 'speak to me in English, I beseech you; though I do understand some Latin.' Then Wolsey proceeded to explain the reason of their visit; 'My lords,' interrupted the queen, 'I thank you for your good-will, but cannot return an answer to your requests so suddenly. I was sitting among my maidens at work, thinking full little of any such matter, wherein there needeth a longer deliberation and a better head than mine, to make answer to men so noble and wise as ye be. I have need of good counsel in a case which toucheth me so nearly: but as for any counsel or friendship that I can find in England, they are not to my profit. Forsooth, my lords, those in whom I intend to put my trust, are not

here ; they are in Spain ; in my native country. Alas ! my lords,' continued this friendless queen, ' I am a poor woman, lacking both wit and understanding, sufficiently to answer such approved wise men as ye both be, in so weighty a matter ; therefore, I pray you, be good unto me, and impartial, for I am a simple woman, destitute and barren of friendship in a foreign country ; and your counsel also I shall be glad to hear.' Upon this,' says Cavendish, who attended Wolsey on this occasion, ' she took my lord by the hand, and led him into the privy chamber, with the other cardinal, where they were in long communication ; we, in the other chamber, might sometimes hear the queen speak very loud, but what it was we could not understand." The cardinals repaired to the king, and informed him of the result of their mission, which appears to have been but little successful.

Appearances having been saved by the temporary retirement of Anne, Henry recalled her to court shortly after Christmas. The Bishop of Bayonne had foretold in one of his letters, that the king's passion would evaporate during her absence ; in a subsequent letter to the French minister, he says : " I acknowledge that I was no conjurer ; and now, to tell you honestly my way of thinking ; the king is so in for it [*le roy en est si avant*,] that nothing but a miracle can save him." But Anne now felt her power, and she determined to make use of it. She affected to resent the manner in which she had been treated ; the king's letter and invitation were treated with contempt ; and the only terms on which she would return were, that her rival, as she modestly called Catharine, should be removed from court, where she was determined to reign supreme. The Bishop of Bayonne's prognostications were verified, and Anne's arrogant demands complied with. " At length," says the bishop, " Mademoiselle de *Boulan*, [the French always misspell English names] has

come back again, and the king has had a handsome suite of rooms splendidly furnished for her close to his own, where there is daily held a levee more fully attended than any of the queen's have been for a long time past." The following notice in Hall is short, but touching: "The king kept his Christmas in Greenwich, with great solemnity, but all men said that there was no mirth in that Christmas because the queen was absent."

The following is a specimen of the solemn mockery exhibited in this affair; one of the English ambassadors is directed officially to state: "that never was there any prince better contented and pleased with a woman, than the king with Catharine, nor ever prince more loved, cherished, and honoured a woman, than the king my master hath done her, and would with heart, mind, and will, keep her still as his wife, if God's holy law would suffer it!" (*Hall*, p. 782.) It is rarely that hypocrisy is altogether so brazen as this.

Catharine, about this time, addressed a pathetic letter to the pontiff, in which she informed him of her banishment from court, and implored his protection. Clement replied by an epistle to Henry, in which, for the last time, he attempted to awaken in his bosom a sense of decency, if not of justice and religion. He painted in forcible terms, the horror in which his conduct caused his name to be regarded throughout Christendom. "He had been informed," he said, "that of late he had changed his conduct towards the Queen of England. Formerly, he had lived with her in his palace, and treated her, pending the controversy between them, with the respect due to a wife and a queen; but now, it was reported that he had removed her from his person and court, and even banished her from the city, taking in her room a certain lady of the name of Anne, with whom he lived, and to whom he showed that conjugal love and affection which was due to the

queen alone.* These proceedings Clement declared himself unwilling to believe. "For what," said he, "can be more unnatural to you, or less consistent with your integrity, than, on the one hand, by your letters and ambassadors to implore our assistance in determining your cause, and, on the other, by your actions to prejudge and decide it for yourself? Alas! how little could we have expected to find this contempt for the authority of the Church, in him who has so ably defended our most holy faith by the strength of argument and by the power of the sword! It was a miserable thing," he continued, "that this one action, if the report that had reached him was true, should cast an everlasting blemish upon the glory of Henry's former life and behaviour; and it was for this reason, that, as he could not overlook a matter of such moment, he was anxious to address to him the admonition of a loving father, before he was compelled to proceed against him as a severe and impartial judge." In conclusion, the pontiff exhorted him, that, as he regarded the favour of the Holy See, and tendered his own salvation, he would amend his ways, recall his injured queen, and dismiss her rival from his intimate and domestic conversation.

But Henry was too far blinded by his impure passion to listen to the counsels of this paternal letter. On the contrary, by awakening the fury of the woman, whose conduct was stigmatised, it only served to precipitate the measures that finally separated England from the communion of the Holy See.

It is plain from the king's letters to Anne, that though her conduct had, in many instances, been very equivocal, she had till now the reputation of a modest woman: old Fuller's expression is, that

* What are we to think when we hear Cranmer, the new archbishop, thus talking of the parties so cohabiting: "The king and my Lady Anne rode together yesterday to Windsor, and this night they be looked for again at Hampton Court. God be their guide! June 13." (Strypes' *Cranmer*, App. No. 1.)

"she was cunning in her chastity." But in a letter of the Bishop of Bayonne of the 15th June following, we read, "I think, that for some time past, the king and Mademoiselle Anne have been more than usually intimate: the ministers must hasten matters here, or certain signs of this intimacy, which it will be impossible to conceal, may spoil everything."

It is curious to hear how the court-historian tells the story: "the Emperor," says Hall, "soon grudged that the queen should be divorced; and surely, the most part of the lay-people of England, which knew not the law of God, sore murmured at the matter: and much the more, because there was a gentlewoman in the court, called Anne Boleyn, whom the king much favoured, *in all honesty*, and surely none otherwise, as all the world well knew after. For this cause, the queen's ladies, gentlewomen, and servants largely spake, and said that she so enticed the king, and brought him into such amours, that only for her sake and occasion he would be divorced from the queen. This was the foolish communication of people, contrary to the truth. (*Chronicle*, p. 759.)

Old Hall felt that he had an awkward task to perform, and he who is proverbially prolix on every other occasion, is wonderously brief on this. Brevity, they say, is the soul of wit, and so it may be of policy too, thought the wary Master Hall.*

In the meantime, Gardener, the king's envoy, had been recalled from Rome, and a licence was issued, empowering the legates to execute their commission. The legantine court was opened on the 18th of June, and on the 21st, the king and queen were summoned to appear. The latter obeyed, but protested against the judges, and appealed to the pope. At the next session, Henry sat in state on the right of the cardinals, and answered in due form to his name. Catha-

* Hall becomes suddenly convinced, like Pistol, "that men of few words are the best men."—*Henry V.*

rine was on their left: and, as soon as she was called, rising from her chair, renewed her protest on three grounds: because she was a stranger; because her judges held benefices in the realm, the gift of her adversary; and because she had good reason to believe, that justice could not be obtained in a court constituted like the present. On the refusal of the cardinals to admit her appeal, she rose a second time, crossed over before them, accompanied by her maids, threw herself at the king's feet, and thus addressed him in broken English:—"Sir, I beseech you for the love that hath been between us, and for the love of God, let me have justice and right; take of me some pity and compassion, for I am a poor woman and a stranger, born out of your dominions. I have here no assured friend, much less impartial counsel; and I flee to you, as to the head of justice within this realm. Alas! Sir, wherein have I offended you, or what occasion given you of displeasure? Have I ever planned aught against your will and pleasure, that you should put me from you? I take God and all the world to witness, that I have been to you a true, humble, and obedient wife, ever conformable to your will and pleasure. Nor have I said or done aught contrary thereto, being always well-pleased and contented with all things wherein you had delight, whether it were in little or much; neither did I ever grudge in word or countenance, or show in visage a spark of discontent. I loved all those whom you loved, only for your sake, whether I had cause or no, whether they were my friends or mine enemies. These twenty years I have been your true wife, and by me ye have had divers children, although, saving my daughter, it hath pleased God to call them out of this world: and when ye married me, I take God to be my judge, that I was a true maid; and whether that be true or not, I put it to your conscience. If there be any just cause by the law that ye can allege against me, either of dishonesty or any other impedi-

ment sufficient to banish and put me from you, I am contented to depart, albeit to my great shame and dishonour; and if there be none, then here I most lowly beseech you, let me remain in my former estate, and receive justice at your hands. The king, your father, was, in the time of his reign, of such estimation through the world for his excellent wisdom, that he was called by all men the second Solomon; and my father, Ferdinand of Spain, was esteemed one of the wisest princes that, for many years, had reigned in Spain. It is not, therefore, to be doubted, but that they elected as wise counsellors about them as to their high discretion was thought meet. Also, as me seemeth, there were in those days, as wise, as learned and judicious men, as be at this present, who then thought the marriage between you and me good and lawful; therefore, it is a wonder to hear that new inventions are brought up against me, who never intended aught but honesty. Ye cause me to stand to the order and judgment of this new court, wherein ye may do much wrong, if ye intend any cruelty; for ye may condemn me for lack of sufficient answer, having no impartial advisers but such as be assigned me, with whose wisdom and learning I am not acquainted. Ye must consider that they who be your subjects cannot be impartial counsellors for my part: they have been chosen out of your own council; they have been made privy to your deliberations; and they dare not, for fear of you, disobey your will, or oppose your intentions. Therefore, most humbly do I require you, in the way of charity, and for the love of God, who is the Just Judge, to spare me the extremity of this new court, until I learn what way my friends in Spain may advise me to take: but, if ye will not extend to me so much impartial favour, your pleasure then be fulfilled, and to God I commit my cause."

Having spoken thus, the queen burst into tears; and instead of returning to her seat, walked out of

court, having first made a low obeisance to the king. An officer was commanded to recall her, and he again summoned her loudly. "Madame," said her receiver-general, on whose arm she leaned, "ye are again called." "Go on," said she, "I hear it very well: but this is no court wherein I can have justice—proceed therefore." She then left the hall, and never again could be persuaded to make her appearance there, either personally or by proxy.

This pathetic appeal, delivered with humility, and yet in the spirit of conscious innocence, made a deep impression on all present. Henry perceived this, and he took occasion to extol the queen in high terms, declaring that she had ever been a devoted and dutiful wife. In this commendation the monarch seems to have forgotten, that, only a short time before, in a complaint made to the privy-council, he had declared, that from the manner in which Catharine had lately conducted herself, he believed she hated him, and that his counsellors, thinking his life was in danger, had advised him to withdraw himself entirely from her company.*

During the whole of these discussions More acted with becoming prudence and reserve. He says in the letter to Cromwell, which we have already cited, "During the whole time the legates sat upon the matter, I never meddled therewith, nor was it meet so to do; for the matter was in hand by an ordinary process of the spiritual law, whereof I had little skill." And he appears to congratulate himself on the circumstance, that, "while yet the legates were sitting upon the matter, it pleased the king's highness to send me, in company of my Lord of London, now

* See Burnet, vol. i. p. 113.—"Whereas, a pure mind in a chaste body, is the mother of wisdom and d. liberation, of sober counsels and ingenuous actions, of open deportment and sweet carriage, of sincere principles and unprejudiced understanding; uncleanness, on the contrary, is the parent of these monsters—blindness of mind, inconsideration, precipitancy or giddiness in actions, timidity and poorness of spirit, and of unkindly arts and stratagems to hide crime, which do nothing but increase it."—*Jeremy Taylor*.

of Durham, on an embassy to Cambray, about the peace, which, at our being there was concluded between his highness and the French king." It is evident that Sir Thomas looked upon this as a lucky escape; for immediately on his return home, he was again annoyed by the king upon this noisome affair.

In some of the sittings of the court, the discussions were carried on with considerable warmth. Wolsey having observed that the point was doubtful, and that no man could know the truth—"Yes," said the Bishop of Rochester, "I for one know the truth." "You know the truth?" said my lord Cardinal. "Forsooth, my lord," said he, "I know that God is Truth itself, and He hath said: what God hath joined, let no man put asunder." "Yes," said Doctor Ridley, "it is a shame and a great disgrace to this honourable presence, that any allegations like these should be made in this open court, which to all good and honest men are detestable to be rehearsed." "So, so," said my lord Cardinal, "*Domine Doctor, magis reverenter*—more reverently, good Doctor, by your leave." "No, no, my lord," added he, "there belongeth no reverence to these abominable presumptions against the express words of Christ: an irreverent tale may be irreverently answered." "And then," says Cavendish, "they left, and proceeded no farther at that time." When the cardinal took his barge with the Bishop of Carlisle, on his way back to Westminster, the bishop said to him, wiping the perspiration from his face, "My lord, the day is very hot." "Yea," quoth my lord Cardinal, "if ye had been as well chafed, as I have been within this hour, ye would say it was very hot!"

According to our notions of things, Anne Boleyn must have had tolerably strong nerves of her own, for Hall informs us, that she was present in the court, and sat out all these proceedings. And yet we can readily believe the fact, when we recollect her subsequent conduct on the news of Catharine's death

being brought her; while Henry shed tears to her memory and ordered his household to wear mourning, she dressed herself in some of her gayest robes of yellow silk, and openly proclaimed her joy at being fairly rid of her rival. But ere six short months had elapsed, these yellow robes were to be tinged with a deeper dye.

On the 23d of July, the court held its last session; and as a decision in favour of the king was anticipated, the hall was crowded. Henry himself was present, but concealed behind the hangings, where he could hear all that passed. When the cardinals had taken their seats, his majesty's counsel demanded judgment. But Campeggio replied: that judgment must be deferred till the whole of the proceedings had been laid before the sovereign pontiff, and for that purpose he pronounced the court adjourned to the commencement of the next term, in the beginning of October. This announcement produced a great sensation in the court, and the reader can easily imagine what were the feelings of the personage behind the arras. Sympathising in his mortification, the Duke of Suffolk started from his seat, and striking the table, exclaimed with vehemence: "That never had they been merry in England, since a cardinal came among them!" Though Wolsey was aware of the risk he incurred of offending the royalty behind the curtain, yet he could not suffer this personal insult to pass unnoticed. Rising with dignity, he, with consummate address, uttered these words, which contain at once a spirited rebuke against Suffolk, and an apology for his own conduct. "Sir, of all men within this realm, ye have the least reason to dispraise cardinals; for, but for me, simple cardinal as I am, you at this moment would have had no head upon your shoulders, and no tongue within your lips to make such a brag in disrepute of us, who intended you no manner of displeasure. Know you, then, proud lord, that I, and

my brother here, will give place neither to you nor to any other in honourable intentions to the king, and a desire to accomplish his lawful wishes. Be-
think ye, my lord, were ye the king's commissioner in a foreign country, having a weighty matter to treat upon, would you venture to decide without first consulting your sovereign? Doubtless ye would consent, and right carefully too; and, therefore, I advise you to banish all hasty malice, and consider that we here are nothing but commissioners for a time; and dare not proceed to judgment without the knowledge of our supreme head. It is for this cause that we do no more nor less than our commission alloweth. Therefore, my lord, take my counsel; hold your peace, pacify yourself, and frame your words like a man of honour and of wisdom. Ye know best what friendship ye have received at my hands, and which I never before this time revealed to any one alive, either to my own glory, or to your dishonour." Suffolk, by his silence, seems to have acknowledged the truth of these secret circumstances to which the cardinal alluded, and the court broke up without further interruption.

A letter from Secretary Gardiner to Wolsey, dated early in September, will show the nervous state of solicitude in which the king lived at this period.

"And whereas your grace at the end of your letter, writeth that ye have certain things to show to the king's highness, which your grace thinketh not convenient to be committed to writing; I assure your grace, that at the reading thereof, his highness seemed altered and moved. Whereupon, as being troubled for the desire of further knowledge, and vainly conjecturing what it is that your grace doth not think convenient to be put into writing, the roads being sure, and without fear of interruption, and his highness knowing that your grace is not wont to spare any labours or pains in writing, when the case so requireth. Musing and marvelling, there-

fore, more and more what the matter should be, he willed me with all diligence to despatch his grace's servant Curson, this bearer, with these letters to your grace, to desire you *incontinently* [directly] to signify to the same the *caput rei*—the heads of the matter, which your grace meaneth." He concludes by repeating his request, that he would send him "the *summum et effectum*, the head and bearing of your gracious mind, to the intent his highness may somewhat quiet his mind and cogitation, and muse no further than needs, upon occasion of the obscure words at the end of your grace's letter."

In September Campeggio prepared for his departure, leaving the affair of the divorce in much the same position as when he came. Henry's patience was worn out, his mistress was ready at hand to foster the growing discontent, and the unsuccessful negotiator with Rome was destined to bear the whole weight of the king's disappointment; and that with Henry, was but another word for ruin and disgrace. The symptoms of Wolsey's approaching fall were evident to every one but himself, for he trusted the hollow professions of men, who, though they had served him faithfully in his prosperity, were ready to betray his confidence in his declining fortunes. "I see," says the Bishop of Bayonne, "that he confides in certain persons, who were the creatures of his hand, but who, I feel assured, have turned their backs upon him; and the worst of the business is, that he is unaware of all that is passing." But his greatest cause for fear, were the arts of a woman, whom we have just seen so solemnly assuring him that her gratitude "should last unfeignedly during her life." An occasion soon presented itself for Anne to weigh her influence with his, and his scale "kicked the beam." For some offence, Wolsey had driven Sir Thomas Cheney from court; he appealed to the king's mistress, and Henry reprimanded the cardinal, and recalled the exile. She now no longer

disguised her hostility; and eagerly seconded the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, and her father the Viscount Rochford, in their united efforts to precipitate the cardinal's downfall. We learn from the Bishop of Bayonne that they had other motives, more substantial than merely their hatred to Wolsey; "The object of these noblemen is, that, when the minister is out of the way, *or dead*, to seize immediately upon the estates of the church—they talk of this freely over their cups. I fancy they will play up a fine game when he is gone."

Previous to Campeggio's departure, he went, accompanied by Wolsey, to Grafton in Northamptonshire, to take his leave of the king. Then it was that the cardinal's pride and hopes received their death-blow. On reaching the country seat where Henry was staying, being then on a progress with his mistress, Campeggio was immediately conducted to an apartment prepared for him, while Wolsey had the mortification to learn that no orders for his accommodation had been given. Sir Henry Norris, pitying his embarrassment, entreated him to make use of his room, where he learned from some of his friends the secret of the king's displeasure. Shortly after, he was summoned to the presence chamber. The meeting is thus admirably described by Cavendish. "At this time, the chamber was filled with noblemen, who were only intent on observing the countenance of the king and him; and what reception he would give him. Immediately after came the king into the chamber, and standing under the cloth of state, my lord kneeled down before him, who took my lord by the hand, and so did he the other cardinal. Then he took up my lord by both arms, and caused him to stand with as amiable a cheer as ever he did. He then called him aside, and led him by the hand to a great window, where he talked with him, and caused him to be covered. Then," continues this minute observer, "could you have beheld

the countenances of those who made their wagers to the contrary, it would have made you smile; and thus were they all deceived, as well worthy for their presumption." Yet, though the courtiers lost their wagers, it was but a gleam of favour; and Wolsey soon discovered that the star of his high fortunes had set for ever. It was observed that Henry used angry words; and he was seen to pluck a letter from his bosom, and hold it up to the cardinal's face, as if demanding whether he could deny his hand-writing. The accused minister seemed to pacify him for the moment, and the conference ended with apparent courtesy on the part of the monarch. On taking leave, he requested him to return the following morning; but the king dined that same day with Anne Boleyn in her chamber, and her influence was irresistible. She took upon her to be offended at the cordial reception which Wolsey had obtained; painted him in the worst colours to Henry, and dwelt with peculiar bitterness upon the delays which he had occasioned in the progress of the divorce. Henry was too much infatuated by his criminal passion, to use his better judgment; and before he rose from table, to use the Bishop of Bayonne's words: "*Mademoiselle de Boulan* had extorted a promise from her friend, that he would never more speak to Wolsey." This promise he faithfully kept, and he never again beheld the face of his old friend and adviser. When Wolsey next morning presented himself at the appointed time, he had the mortification to learn that the royal cavalcade had departed an hour earlier than had been arranged the evening previous, evidently with a view to balk him of his intended audience with the king. Henry and Anne had gone to spend the day at Harewell Park, and did not return home till the cardinal, in consequence of a hint which he had received, had departed for London.

This, however, was but the beginning of sorrows. On his return two bills were filed against him in the

Court of King's Bench, by which it was ultimately decided, "That Cardinal Wolsey was out of the king's protection, his lands, goods, and chattels forfeited, and that his person might be seized." On the same day it was intimated to him that the king meant to take up his residence at York-place, and that he might retire to Esher, a seat belonging to the bishopric of Winchester. That the very name of the Cardinal of York might, as far as possible, be obliterated, Hall informs us, that "the name of the place was changed; it was called the King's Manor of Westminster, and no longer York-place." Is not the hand of Mademoiselle Anne visible here too?

These combined mortifications plunged the poor cardinal into despair. He knew the stern temper of his prosecutor, and all that he had to dread from the ill-omened "night-bird"—to use his own expression, that possessed the royal ear. He resigned the seals to the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, and transferred by deed his whole personal estate, which was valued at 500,000 crowns, to the king. Every resource of malice had been exhausted to add to his mortification. The news of his disgrace had been officiously circulated through the metropolis, so that on entering his barge he was surprised to behold the Thames covered with boats, and lined with spectators. Both the courtiers and the citizens had crowded together to behold his arrest and commitment to the Tower: but he disappointed their curiosity and their hopes, and landed at Putney, on ascending the hill near which place occurred the scene we have before had occasion to describe. (*See above, p. 62.*)

Among the lessons taught by history to the pride of our nature, there are few more humbling than that of the latter days of Wolsey. Though it carries us somewhat from the course of our narrative, the reader who has gazed at this extraordinary man in the zenith of his greatness, will be anxious to know how he comported himself in his state of destitution—for, to the shame of his persecutors be it spoken, to such a

state was he reduced. Hear what he says in a letter to Bishop Gardiner.

“ My house is in decay, and with everything mete for household unprovided and unfurnished. I have not apparel for my house, nor money to bring me thither [to York] nor to live with till the propitious time of the year shall come round to remove thither. These things considered, Mr. Secretary, must needs make me in agony and heaviness; mine age therewith and sickness considered. Alas! Mr. Secretary, you, with other my lords, showed me that I should be otherwise furnished and seen unto. And if ye would please to show this to the king, it is not to be doubted but his highness would have consideration and compassion, augmenting my living, and appointing such things as should be convenient for my furniture; which to do, shall be to the king's high honour, merit, and discharge of conscience; and to you great praise for the bringing of the same to pass, for your old bringer-up and loving friend. This kindness from the king's highness shall prolong my life some little while, though it shall not be long. Remember, good Mr. Secretary, my poor degree, and what service I have done: and how, now approaching to death, I have to begin the world again. I beseech you, therefore, moved with pity and compassion, succour me in this my calamity, and to your power, which I know is great, relieve me; and I, with all mine, shall not only ascribe this my relief to you, but also pray God for the increase of your honour. And as my power shall increase, so I shall not fail to requite your kindness.* Written hastily at Esher, with the rude and shaking hand of your daily bedesman and assured friend.”

In a letter to Cromwell, of nearly the same date, he says: “ If his majesty, considering the little time that I have to live here in this world, by reason of

* In this little trait we see the ruling passion of the ex-minister strong to the last. In his veriest destitution, the courtier breaks forth as active as ever.

such heaviness as I have conceived in my heart, with the meanness and decay of the old house, would that I may have some convenient pension, such as the king's highness of his noble charity shall think mete. God is my judge, that I have no desire for the mire of this world, for, at this hour, I set no more by the riches and promotions of this world, than by the dust under my feet; but only for the declaration of the king's honour and high charity, and to have wherewith to do good deeds, and to help my poor servants and kinsfolk. At the reverence, therefore, of God, my own good Mr. Secretary, and my refuge, now set to your hand that I may come to a laudable end and repose, seeing that I may be furnished after such a sort and manner that I may end my short time and life to the honour of Christ's church, and of the prince. Written at Esher, with the trembling hand and heavy heart of your assured lover and bedesman."

The Bishop of Bayonne, in a letter to the French minister in Paris, thus describes his visit to the fallen cardinal. "I have been to visit Wolsey in his distress, and have witnessed the most striking change of fortune. He detailed to me his hard fortune in the worst rhetoric that was ever heard. Both his tongue and his heart failed him. He recommended himself to the pity of the king and Madame (Francis I. and his mother,) with a world of sighs and tears: but, after all, there was nothing he said near so moving as his look and appearance. His face is dwindled to one half of its natural size. In truth his misery is such, that his enemies, Englishmen as they are, cannot help pitying him. They seem determined to carry things to extremities. As for his legation, the seals, his authority, &c. he thinks no more of them. He is willing to give up every thing, even the very shirt from his back, and to end his days in a hermitage, would but the king desist from his displeasure." He says in another place, "I see no hope for the cardinal; the Duke of Norfolk

is chief of the council, and in his absence Suffolk, and above all, Mademoiselle Anne rules the cabinet.*

"Greatness," said Sir Thomas Overbury, half a century later, "comes not down by the same way it went up: the distance between the highest and the lowest fortune being often so very small a thing!"

"The sudden and violent fall of a man from the pinnacle of greatness to an unexpected grave, is one of those tragic scenes in human affairs, which has a power over the heart, even when unaided by esteem; and often reflects back on his life an unmerited interest, which, though inspired by the downfall, is in some degree transferred to the fallen individual."—*Sir J. Mackintosh.*

To appoint a successor to Wolsey in the Chancery, was an object of great importance; and, after some deliberation, this important and responsible office was conferred upon Sir Thomas More. The Duke of Norfolk became president of the cabinet, and the Duke of Suffolk, earl marshal; Sir William Fitzwilliam received the appointments that More had held, and Dr. Stephen Gardiner was made secretary to the king. Anne Boleyn's father, soon after created Earl of Wiltshire, retained his former place.

"It may justly excite surprise," observes Dr. Lingard, "that More should accept this dangerous office. With a delicate conscience, and a strong sense of duty, he was not a fit associate for less timorous colleagues: the difficulties, which in the course of two years compelled him to retire from court, must, even now, have stared him in the face: and it was still in his power to avoid, but uncertain if he could weather the storm." Had the following

* Cresacre speaks out in the honest simplicity of his day. "To what a strange pass was Henry brought by doating on Anne Boleyn! and yet, God knows, she had no qualities whereof he should so doat upon her, as evidently appeared when, for foul matters, he after a short time cut off her head, and proclaimed himself in open parliament to be a cuckold. This he never had been, if he had kept himself to his first virtuous queen, Catharine:" and he feelingly adds, "we see and feel these miseries as yet."

passage from a letter of More to Dr. Wilson been present to the historian's mind at the time he wrote the above, we think he would have somewhat qualified the passage. More says, that on entering upon office, "no other commandment had I ever of his grace in good faith, saving that this knot his highness added thereto, that I should therein look first unto God, and after God unto him; which word was also the first lesson that his grace gave me what time I first came into his noble service, and neither a more indifferent commandment, nor a more gracious lesson could ever king, in my mind, give his counsellor, or any his other servant." Rastell has the following reflection on this subject: "When we consider that Wolsey never truly loved him, nor that the king could conceive any great hope that he would be corrupted to speak against what was good and just, it was strange to see More thus advanced. It was, doubtless, the providence of God that so appointed it, that so great a light should not be concealed under a bushel, but shine to all within the house."

The particulars of his instalment are not unworthy of being specified, as a proof of the reverence for his endowments and excellences professed by the king, and entertained by the public, to whose judgment the ministers of Henry seemed virtually to appeal, with an assurance that the king's appointment would be ratified by the general voice.* "He was led be-

* It is rare to detect an inaccuracy in Lingard; Hume and others have led him into the following: "There were few instances in which the seals had been entrusted to any but dignified churchmen, none in which they had been given to a simple knight. On this account, he was accompanied to the Star-chamber by a crowd of bishops and noblemen, and the Duke of Norfolk conducting him to his seat, pronouncing an eulogium on his talents and virtues," &c.

The following instances where simple knights have been honoured with the chancellorship are upon record:—

In 16th of Edward 3d, A.D. 1342, Sir Robert Bourchier, knight, was made chancellor. In 1372, the same monarch raised Sir Robert de Thorp, knight, to the same office. In 1379, Richard II. made Sir Richard de la Scrope chancellor. In 1383, Sir Michael de la Pole had the great seal delivered to him by the same monarch. In 1410, in the reign of Henry IV., Sir Thomas Beaufort, knight, was made lord chancellor.

tween the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk up Westminster-Hall to the Stone-Chamber, and there they honourably placed him in the high judgment-seat of chancellor" (for the chancellor was, by his office, the president of that terrible tribunal). "The Duke of Norfolk, by the command of the king, spoke thus *unto the people there with great applause and joy gathered together.*"*

"The king's majesty (which I pray God, may prove happy and fortunate to the whole realm of England) hath raised to the most high dignity of chancellorship Sir Thomas More, a man for his extraordinary worth and sufficiency well known to himself and the whole realm, for no other cause or earthly respect, but for that he hath plainly perceived all the gifts of nature and grace to be heaped upon him, which either the people could desire or himself wish, for the discharge of so great an office. For the admirable wisdom, integrity, and innocency, joined with most pleasant facility of wit, that this man is endowed withal, have been sufficiently known to all Englishmen from his youth, and for these many years also to the king's majesty himself. This hath the king abundantly found in many and weighty affairs, which he hath happily despatched both at home and abroad; in divers offices which he hath borne in most honourable embassages which he hath undergone; and in his daily counsel and advice upon all other occasions. He hath perceived no man in

* This joy appears to have been general, with the exception of certain spirits soured by the German leaven, which they had brought with them from over the water. More thus speaks of the leader of the party, who was his great opponent :

"Tyndall was fain to make a show of his high worldly wit, and that men should see that there was nothing done among princes, but he was fully advertised of all their secrets. Thus dealings between the king's highness, and the late lord cardinal, and the Reverend father Cuthbert, then Bishop of London, and myself, that it was wittily devised that the cardinal should leave the chancellorship to me, and the bishopric of Durham to my said lord of London, for a while, till he list himself to take them both again. Was not this a wily devise, trow ye?"

his realm to be more wise in deliberating, more sincere in opening to him what he thought, nor more eloquent to adorn the matter which he uttered. Wherefore, because he saw in him such excellent endowments, and that of his especial care he hath a particular desire that his kingdom and people might be governed with all equity and justice, integrity and wisdom, he of his own most gracious disposition hath created this singular man lord chancellor; that, by his laudable performance of this office, his people may enjoy peace and justice; and honour also and fame may rebound to the whole kingdom. It may, perhaps, seem to many a strange and unusual matter, that this dignity should be bestowed upon a layman, none of the nobility, and one that hath wife and children; because heretofore none but singular learned prelates, or men of greatest nobility, have possessed this place; but what is wanting in these respects, the admirable virtues, the matchless gifts of wit and wisdom of this man, doth most plentifully recompense the same. For the king's majesty hath not regarded how great, but what a man he was; he hath not cast his eyes upon the nobility of his blood, but on the worth of his person; he hath respected his sufficiency, not his profession; finally, he would show by this his choice, that he had some rare subjects amongst the ranks of gentlemen and laymen, who deserve to manage the highest offices of the realm, which bishops and noblemen think they only can deserve. The rarer therefore it was, so much both himself held it to be the more excellent, and to his people he thought it would be the more grateful. Wherefore, receive this your chancellor with joyful acclamations, at whose hands you may expect all happiness and content."

"Sir Thomas More, according to his wonted modesty, was somewhat abashed at this the duke's speech, in that it sounded so much to his praise; but recollecting himself, as place and time would give

him leave, he answered in this sort:—‘ Although most noble duke, and you, right honorable lords, and worshipful gentlemen, I know all these things, which the king’s majesty, it seemeth, hath been pleased should be spoken of me at this time and place, and your grace hath with most eloquent words thus amplified, are as far from me, as I could wish with all my heart, they were in me, for the better performance of so great a charge; and although this your speech hath caused in me greater fear than I can well express in words; yet this incomparable favour of my dread sovereign, by which he showeth how well, yea how highly he conceiveth of my weakness, having commanded that my meanness should be so greatly commended, cannot be but most acceptable unto me: and I cannot choose but give your most noble grace exceeding thanks, that what his majesty hath willed you briefly to utter, you, of the abundance of your love unto me, have in a large and eloquent oration dilated. As for myself, I can take it no otherwise, but that his majesty’s incomparable favour towards me, the good-will and incredible propension of his royal mind (wherewith he hath these many years favored me continually), hath alone, without any desert of mine at all, caused both this my new honour, and these your undeserved commendations of me. For who am I, or what is the house of my father, that the king’s highness should heap upon me, by such a perpetual stream of affection, these so high honours? I am far less than any the meanest of his benefits bestowed on me; how can I then think myself worthy or fit for this so peerless a dignity? I have been drawn by force, as the king’s majesty often professeth, to his highness’s service, to be a courtier; and to take this dignity upon me, is most of all against my will. Yet such is his highness’s benignity, such is his bounty, that he highly esteemeth the small dutifulness of his meanest subjects, and seeketh still magnificently to recompense his servants; not

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only such as deserve well, but even such as have but a desire to deserve well at his hands, in which number I have always wished myself to be reckoned, because I cannot challenge myself to be one of the former. This being so, you may all perceive with me how great a burden is laid upon my back; in that I must strive in some sort with my diligence and duty to correspond with his royal benevolence, and to be answerable to that great expectation, which he and you seem to have of me; wherefore, those so high praises are so much more grievous unto me, by how much more I know the greater charge I have to render myself worthy of, and the fewer means I have to make them good. This weight is hardly suitable to my weak shoulders; this honour is not correspondent to my poor desert: it is a burden, not a glory; a care, not a dignity; the one therefore I must bear as manfully as I can, and discharge the other with as much dexterity as I shall be able. The earnest desire which I have always had, and do now acknowledge myself to have, to satisfy by all the means I possibly can, the most ample benefits of his highness, will greatly excite and aid me to the diligent performance of all, which I trust also I shall be more able to do, if I find all your good wills and wishes both favourable unto me, and conformable to his royal munificence: because my serious endeavours to do well, joined with your favourable acceptance, will easily procure that whatsoever is performed by me, though it be in itself but small, yet it will seem great and praiseworthy; for those things are always achieved happily, which are accepted willingly; and those succeed fortunately, which are received by others courteously. As you, therefore, hope for great matters and the best at my hands, so, though I dare not promise any such, yet do I promise truly and affectionately to perform the best I shall be able."

When Sir Thomas More had spoken these words, turning his face to the high judgment seat of the

Chancery, he proceeded in this manner:—"But, when I look upon this seat, when I think how great and what kind of personages have possessed this place before me, when I call to mind who he was that sate in it last of all—a man of what singular wisdom, of what notable experience, what a prosperous and favourable fortune he had for a great space, and how at last he had a most grievous fall and died inglorious—I have cause enough, by my predecessor's example, to think honour but slippery, and this dignity not so grateful to me as it may seem to others; for both is it a hard matter to follow with like paces or praises, a man of such admirable wit, prudence, authority, and splendour, to whom I may seem but as the lighting of a candle when the sun is down; and also the sudden and unexpected fall of so great a man as he was, doth terribly put me in mind that this honour ought not to please me too much, nor the lustre of his glittering seat dazzle mine eyes. Wherefore I ascend this seat as a place full of labour and danger, void of all solid and true honour; the which by how much the higher it is, so much the greater fall I have to fear, as well in respect of the very nature of the thing itself, as because I am warned by this late fearful example. And truly I might even now, at this very entrance, stumble, yea, faint, but that his majesty's most singular favour towards me, and all your good wills, which your joyful countenance doth testify in this most honourable assembly, do somewhat recreate and refresh me; otherwise this seat would be no more pleasing to me, than that sword was to Damocles, which hung over his head, tied only by a horse-hair when he had store of delicate fare before him, seated in the chair of state of Dyonysius the Tyrant of Sicily. This therefore shall always be fresh in my mind, this will I have still before mine eyes, that this seat will be honourable, famous, and full of glory unto me, if I shall with care and diligence, fidelity and wisdom,

endeavour to do my duty, and shall persuade myself that the enjoying thereof may be but short and uncertain: the former my labour ought to perform; the latter my predecessor's example may easily teach me. All which being so, you may easily perceive whether I take a greater pleasure in this high dignity, or in this most noble duke's praising of me."

"And as they had before charged him," adds Roper, "on the king's behalf, uprightly to administer justice to the people, without corruption or partiality; so did he likewise charge them again, that, if they at any time saw him in any respect digress from any part of his duty in that honourable office, even as they would discharge their own duty and fidelity to God and the king, so should they not fail to disclose it to his grace, who might otherwise have just occasion to lay his faults wholly to their charge."

When it is recollected that this speech was delivered extempore, and upon that difficult subject a man's self, it is impossible to withhold our admiration. There is something striking in the anticipations in the closing part of it, that he should not long enjoy his dangerous pre-eminence.

"All the world now took notice of Sir Thomas's dignity, whereof Erasmus writeth to John Fabius, bishop of Vienna, thus:—'Concerning the new increase of honour lately happened to Thomas More, I should easily make you believe it, were I to show you the letters of many famous men, rejoicing with much alacrity, and congratulating the king, the realm, himself, and also me, for More's honour, in being made lord chancellor of England.'"

When Sir Thomas More was seated in the court of Chancery, his father, Sir John More, who was nearly of the age of ninety, was the most ancient judge of the king's bench. "What a grateful spectacle was it," says their descendant, "to see the son ask the blessing of the father every day upon his

knees, before he sat upon his own seat!" Even in a more unceremonious age, the simple character of More would have protected these daily rites of filial reverence from the suspicion of affectation, which could alone destroy their charm. But at that time, it must have borrowed its chief power from the conspicuous excellence of the father and son. For if, as Sir J. Mackintosh remarks, inward worth had then borne any proportion to the grave and reverend ceremonial of the age, we might be well warranted in regarding our forefathers as a race of superior beings.*

The plain attire and dignified simplicity of Sir Thomas formed a singular contrast to the pomp and circumstance in which his predecessor made his daily visits to the court of Chancery. We quote the narrative of Cavendish for its minute and graphic fidelity.

"Now will I declare unto you his [Wolsey's] order in going to Westminster Hall, daily, in the term season. First, before his coming out of his privy chamber, he heard most commonly every day two masses in his privy closet, and then said his daily service with his chaplain: and as I heard his chaplain say, being a man of credence and of excellent learning, that the cardinal, what business or weighty

* In relating this anecdote Stapleton adds: "This was a good old custom of our land. Every day, morning and evening, the children are accustomed to come and on bended knee ask the blessing of their parents. Did this good custom still obtain, it might be that parents would have children more dutiful, the state more obedient subjects, and the church more reverend and faithful sons."

In Chamberlain's collection of Heads by Holbein, to which we have before had occasion to refer, is a highly interesting portrait of More's father. The editor observes—"This is the head of a wise man, and Holbein's pencil has seldom been accused of infidelity." It exactly corresponds to his son's description: "A man of courteous and pleasant manners, harmless, gentle, full of compassion, just and incorrupt, old indeed in years, yet fresh for his age in bodily strength." We may add, that it has all the character of Sir Thomas, the same play of humour about the lip, and the same arch expression in the eye.

As we are on the subject of portraits, it should not be forgotten, that there is a remarkable resemblance between Holbein's heads of More and his friend Erasmus.

matters soever he had in the day, never went to his bed with any part of his divine service unsaid, yea, not so much as one collect: wherein I doubt not but he deceived the opinions of divers persons. And after mass he would return to his privy chamber again, and being advertised of the furniture of his chambers without with noblemen, gentlemen, and other persons, would issue out unto them, apparelled all in red, in the habit of a cardinal: which was either of fine scarlet, or else of crimson, satin, taffaty, damask or caffia, the best that he could get for money: and upon his head a round pillion, with a noble of black velvet set to the same in the inner side; he had also a tippet of fine sables about his neck; holding in his hands a very fair orange, whereof the meat or substance within was taken out and filled up again with the part of a sponge, wherein was vinegar, and other confections against the pestilent airs; the which he most commonly smelt unto passing among the press, or else when he was pestered with many suitors. There was also borne before him, first, the great seal of England, and then his cardinal's hat, by a nobleman or some worthy gentleman, right solemnly, bareheaded. And as soon as he was entered into his chamber of presence, where there was attending his coming, to wait upon him to Westminster Hall, as well noblemen and other worthy gentlemen, as noblemen and gentlemen of his own family; thus passing forth with two great crosses of silver borne before him, also with two great pillars of silver, and his pursuivant at arms with a great mace of silver gilt. Then his gentlemen ushers cried, and said, 'On, my lords and masters, on before; make way for my lord's grace!' Thus passed he down from his chamber through the hall; and when he came to the hall door, there was attendant for him his mule, trapped altogether in crimson velvet, and gilt stirrups. When he was mounted, with his cross bearers, and pillar bearers,

also upon great horses trapped with fine scarlet, then marched he forward, with his train and furniture in manner as I have declared, having about him four footmen, with gilt pollaxes in their hands; and thus he went until he came to Westminster Hall door. And there he alighted, and went after this manner, up through the hall into the chancery."

Nor was the contrast less striking within the court, than from without. No application could be made to Wolsey which did not pass through many hands; and no man could apply, whose fingers were not tipped with gold. But More sat daily in an open hall, that he might receive in person the petitions of the poor. If any reader should blame his conduct in this respect as a breach of an ancient and venerable precept, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness *in judgment*; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty; but in *righteousness* shalt thou *judge* thy neighbour;"* let it be remembered, that there still clung to the equitable jurisdiction some remains of that precarious and eleemosynary nature from which it originally sprung; which, in the eyes of the compassionate chancellor, might warrant more preference for the helpless poor than could be justified in proceedings more rigorously legal. This and the following are the remarks of Sir J. Mackintosh.

Courts of law were jealous then, as since, of the powers assumed by chancellors to issue *injunctions* to parties to desist from doing certain acts which they were by law entitled to do, until the court of Chancery should determine whether the exercise of the legal right would not work injustice. There are many instances in which irreparable wrong may be committed, before a right can be ascertained in the ordinary course of proceedings. In such cases it is the province of the chancellor to take

* Leviticus, xix. 15.

care that affairs shall continue in their actual condition until the questions in dispute be determined. A considerable outcry against this necessary, though invidious authority, was raised at the commencement of More's chancellorship. He silenced this clamour with his wonted prudence and meekness. Having caused one of the six clerks to make out a list of the injunctions issued by him, or pending before him, he invited all the judges to dinner. He laid the list before them; and explained the circumstances of each case so satisfactorily, that they all confessed that in the like case they would have done no less. Nay, he offered to desist from the jurisdiction, if they would undertake to restrict the law within the boundaries of righteousness, which he thought in conscience they ought to do. The judges declined making the attempt; on which he observed privately to Roper, that he saw they trusted to their influence for obtaining verdicts, which would shift the responsibility from them to the juries. "Wherefore," said he, "I am constrained to abide the adventure of their blame."

Dauncey, one of his sons-in-law, alleged that, under Wolsey, "even the door-keepers got great gains," and so perverted was he by the venality then practised, that he expostulated with More for his churlish integrity. The chancellor said, that if "his father whom he revered dearly, were on one side, and the devil, whom he hated with all his might, on the other, the devil should have his right." "He is represented by his descendant," says Sir J. Mackintosh, "as softening his answer by promising minor advantages, such as priority of hearing, and recommendation of arbitration, where the case of a friend was bad. The biographer, however, not being a lawyer, might have misunderstood the conversation, which had to pass through more than one generation before the tradition reached him; or the words may have been a hasty effusion of good-nature, uttered

only to qualify the roughness of his honesty. If he had been called to perform these promises, his head and heart would have recoiled alike from breaches of equality, which he would have felt to be altogether dishonest. When Heron, another of his sons-in-law, relied upon the bad practice of the times so far as to entreat a favourable judgment in a cause of his own, More, though the most affectionate of fathers, immediately undeceived him by an adverse decree. This act of common justice is made an object of panegyric by the biographer, as if it were then deemed an extraordinary instance of virtue; a deplorable symptom of that corrupt state of general opinion, which, half a century later, contributed to betray into ignominious vices, the wisest of men, and the most illustrious of chancellors,—if the latter distinction be not rather due to the virtue of a More or a Somers.*

“The king,” says Hall, “began his high court of Parliament, the third of November, this year; on which day he came by water to his palace of Bridewell, and there he and his nobles robed, and so went to the Black Friars’ church, where a mass of the Holy Ghost was solemnly sung; after which the king repaired to the parliament chamber, where, when he was seated on the throne, Sir Thomas More, his chancellor, standing on his right hand, made an eloquent oration, declaring that, like as a good shepherd who not only keepeth and attendeth well his sheep, but also provideth for all things that either may be hurtful to the flock, or may preserve and defend them against all perils: so the king, who was the shepherd, ruler, and governor of this realm, vigilantly foreseeing things to come, considered how divers laws by the mutation of things are insufficient and imperfect, and also by the frail condition of man,

* Of the greater proportion of his brethren in office how justly might More have exclaimed with the magistrate in Plautus:

“*Homunculi quanti sunt cum recogito!*”

What puny creatures, when I take their measure!”

divers new enormities were sprung up among the people, for the reform of which there was yet no law, which was the very cause why, at this time, the king had summoned his high court of parliament. And so he resembled the king to a shepherd : and as you see that, amongst a great flock, some are rotten and faulty, which the good shepherd severeth from the sound sheep, so the great wether, which is of late fallen, as you all know, juggled with the king so craftily, scabbedly, and untruly, that all men must think that he imagined that the king had no sense to perceive his crafty doings, or presumed that he would not see or understand his fraudulent juggling and attempts. But he was deceived ; for his grace's sight was so quick and penetrable, that he not only saw him, but saw through him ; so that he was entirely open to him. According to his desert, he hath had a gentle correction ; which meek punishment he would not should be an example to other offenders ; but openly declareth, that whosoever hereafter shall make the like attempts, or counsel the like offences, shall not escape with the like punishment."

It must be confessed that the phrase "great rotten wether," as alluding to Wolsey, is in bad taste, and altogether unworthy of More ; it looks too like a disposition to cater to the bad feelings of his royal master, who was present. The only thing to be pleaded in More's excuse, is the general odium that at this moment prevailed against the attainted cardinal, the influence of which some of the best men of that day could not escape. Tytler, contrasting this coarse phrase with the bold eulogium of the cardinal, pronounced scarcely a month before, thinks that "the two statements are not altogether inconsistent. The praise is given to Wolsey's talents for business, which were undoubtedly of a high order ; the censure is directed against his want of integrity, and his subtle and crafty administration—faults notorious to all the country, and which the new chan-

cellor, though he might have selected a more delicate appellation, was justified in laying to his charge." Whether this explanation should satisfy the reader, we are not altogether prepared to say. It should not, however, be forgotten that the reporter of this speech is Hall, the court historian, whose prejudice both to More and Wolsey is notorious.

So indefatigable was Sir Thomas in his application to business, and despatched the causes before him so rapidly, that having one day ended a cause, and called for the next, he received for answer, *that not a single cause remained*. This fact he ordered to be entered upon record; and deservedly so, as it is probably the only miracle of the kind mankind will ever witness. This fact gave rise to the following epigram:

When More sometime had chancellor been,
No more suits did remain;
The same shall never more be seen,
Till More be there again.

It was evident that he performed the work of public utility with the relish of an amateur, and not according to the mere routine of office; his was the feeling of a character in old Plautus:

Quid est suavius quam bene rem gerere bono publico!

What task more grateful can a man fulfil,
Than to discharge the public duty well!

More's turn for drollery did not forsake him, even in his highest elevation. On one occasion, an attorney whose name was Tubb, handed Sir Thomas a case, requesting his signature to it. On reading it over, and finding it a frivolous matter, instead of his signature he added—*a tale of a tub*. The attorney gravely marched away with the paper; nor did he discover the joke, till he found the laugh going

against him, when the document was reproduced in court.

It had been whispered soon after the disgrace of the cardinal, that an attack was meditated by the new ministers, upon the property of the church. A letter, signed by the majority of the lords spiritual and temporal, was addressed to the Pope, in July, in which it was represented how much they and the whole body of the nation were interested in the king's divorce, with a request that he would expedite the affair, in order to render it unnecessary to resort to more disagreeable remedies. Wolsey, though in the midst of his fallen fortunes, willingly subscribed the document: the name of More is not found in the list. In the event of Clement's refusal, Norfolk, the Earl of Wiltshire, and other creatures of the king, had determined that the marriage should be dissolved by the absolute authority of parliament; from the obsequiousness of which they expected to be able to effect all they wished. They found, however, that they had calculated wrongly, and that there were some men of unbending principles, whom no threats or flattery could win over to injustice. Several of the bishops took their stand against the measure,* and among them there was one champion at least, for the good cause, whose integrity, learning, and weight of opinion, there was no resisting. This was Bishop Fisher, who thus boldly exposed the designs against the church: "I hear," said he, "that a motion has been made to surrender the smaller monasteries into the king's hands. I hear much anxiety expressed for the reformation of the vicious lives of the clergy, but I suspect it is not so much the good, as the goods, of the church that men are now looking after. Beware, my lords," he exclaimed with great earnestness, "beware of your-

* "Many of the bishops frowned and grunted," is the uncourtly phrase of Hall, the Court historian.

selves, of your country, your religion, and your Holy mother, the Catholic church. There are novelties abroad; Lutherism is spreading among the people, and let me beseech you to remember, from the recent miseries of Germany and Bohemia, what disasters, from the same causes, are impending over ourselves. Resist then," he concluded, "resist manfully, my lords, as becomes ye, the mischiefs intended; or, if you do not, be prepared to see all obedience withdrawn, not only from the clergy, but from yourselves." This spirited address was received with different feelings, according as the peers were inclined to favour or take alarm at the king's designs; but the Duke of Norfolk, whose schemes it exposed, could not repress his resentment. "My lord of Rochester, said he, "many of these words might have been spared; but if I trow, 'tis often seen that the greatest clerks are not always the wisest men;" to which Fisher retorted, "My lord Duke, I do not remember any fools in my time that have proved great clerks." Complaint was made to Henry, of the bishop's boldness, and he was enjoined to express himself more guardedly in future—a temperate rebuke, which may be ascribed to the suspense in which Henry's mind then remained respecting the measure in question.

Sir Thomas had been a very short time installed in office, when the old and odious subject—the divorce, was again obtruded upon him. More endeavoured to excuse himself from offering an opinion, under the plea that he was unmeet for such matters, never having professed the study of divinity. But the king "*sorely*" pressed him, and never ceased urging him until he had promised to give his consent, at least, to examine the question, conjointly with his friend Tunstall and other learned divines. After the examination, More, with his wonted ingenuousness and candour, conveyed the result to his master. "To be plain with your grace, neither your

bishops, wise and virtuous though they be, nor myself, nor any other of your council, by reason of your manifold benefits bestowed on us, are meet counselors for your grace herein. If you mind to understand the truth, consult St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and other holy doctors of the Greek and Latin churches, who will not be inclined to deceive you either out of respect for their own worldly interests, or by fear of your princely displeasure." Though the king did not like what "was disagreeable to his desires, yet the language of More was so wisely tempered, that for the present he took it in good part, and oftentimes had conferences with the chancellor thereon." The native meekness of More was probably more effectual than all the arts by which courtiers ingratiate themselves, or insinuate unpalatable counsel.

Shortly after, the king again moved him to weigh and consider the great matter. The chancellor fell down on his knees, and, reminding Henry of his own words on delivering the great seal, which were "first look upon God, and after God upon me," added, that nothing had ever so pained him as that he was not able to serve his grace in that matter, without a breach of that original injunction which he had received on the acceptance of his office. The king said he was content to accept his service otherwise, and would continue his favour, never with that matter molesting his conscience afterwards. But this language proceeded from Henry's heart as it *should have been*, and not, as we shall find, from what it *was*. His honest integrity was, however, so far respected, that, for a time, he was indulged in the permission to retire from the council-chamber, as often as that subject was brought under consideration.

In the meantime, as the journey of the legate to England, and all the king's tortuous negotiations with the See of Rome, had not tended to expedite

the divorce, ingenuity had recourse to other methods for bringing it about.

The opinions of the two universities at home had already been secured, partly by means of gold, and partly by the power of threats. Honest old Cavendish says: "The commissioners had the travail, yet were the charges the king's. I heard it repeated of credible persons, that, besides the great charges of these commissioners, there were inestimable sums of money given to the famous clerks to *choke* them, and in especial to such as had the governance and custody of the universities' seals." "Burnet," says Hallam, "will not allow that Henry menaced the University of Oxford in case of non-compliance, yet there are three letters of his to them, a tenth part of which, considering the nature of the writer, was enough to terrify a doctor of divinity." For proof of his assertion he refers to Strype.

Having succeeded so well at home, he hoped to be able to obtain an equally favourable opinion from various universities of Italy, France, and Germany, and for this purpose recourse was had to all those arts by which the venal, the unsuspecting, and sometimes even the good and the wise, are wrought upon. Nothing was spared—artifice, entreaty, or bribery,* but more particularly, the latter. Several of the universities of Italy and France were induced to decide in favour of the king, but in the German states he was not so successful. Not one public body could be brought to espouse his cause; even the reformed divines, with a few exceptions, loudly condemned the measure. Luther, of course, was not to be won; he had not forgotten his old grudge to Henry, and he wrote with his own hand to Barnes, the royal

* *Nulla non astu, et prece, et pretio.*
Epist. Clementis apud Raynald, p. 647.

For I am sure the king
Paid ere he promised; whence his suit was granted
Ere he had asked.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Henry VIII.*

agent, that he would rather allow the king to have two wives at once, than to consent to his separation from Catharine. There might also have been a secret feeling, an old association active in Luther's bosom : there had been a question in his regard, of a separation from a Catharine—a certain Catharine Borer, which might have weighed with him by a peculiar sympathy at this time.

In the midst of these schemes, news arrived from Rome that Clement, after due deliberation, felt compelled to issue an inhibitory breve, forbidding all ecclesiastical courts or tribunals to give judgment in the matrimonial cause of Henry against Catharine. The king was observed to grow unusually pensive. He found all his schemes to bring about the divorce abortive. He began to exhibit symptoms of a change of mind. All his expedients had failed, and considerable sums of money, which he could ill spare, had been lavished without effect. He grew discontented ; and observed to his confidants that he had been grossly deceived : he should never have dreamed of a divorce had it not been put into his head that the bull of dispensation had been invalid. He had been afterwards assured that the papal approbation might be easily obtained ; that assurance had proved false, and he would now abandon the attempt for ever. In this frame of mind meeting with Dr. Clark, the Bishop of Bath, he said to him in a tone of impatience : " My lord of Bath, what think ye, is the bull good, or is it naught ? If it be naught, let it be so declared ; and if good, then it shall never be set aside by me." (*Herbert.*) The Wyatts, the Brians, and all the other intriguants of the court, who were something more than the favourers and partisans of Anne, hastened to whisper in her ear the news of the king's " back-sliding." Dismay was painted on the countenances of the mistress and of those who fed upon her bounty and her smiles. Their disgrace was confidently foretold, when they were rescued from impending ruin

by the appearance of one of those agents of mischief, whom the Evil one has always ready at hand when their services are wanted.

In Wolsey's establishment there was a man of the name of Crumwell, the son of a fuller in Putney, who had emerged from obscurity, and been employed by the cardinal in the dissolution of the smaller monasteries, granted him for the support of his colleges. In this trust he had not failed to enrich himself; but, what is worse, he had learned a pernicious lesson, which was, somewhat later, carried into effect upon a fearful scale. This man had for several years been a rover in Italy, and on one occasion, in a moment of communicativeness very unusual with him, had opened his mind to Cardinal Pole. He confessed himself to be a disciple of the Machiavelian school, and had learned that vice and virtue were but names, fit indeed to amuse the leisure of collegians, but pernicious to the man who seeks to rise in the courts of princes. According to his views, the great art of the politician was to penetrate through the disguise which sovereigns are accustomed to throw over their real inclinations, and to devise the most specious expedients by which they may gratify their appetites, without appearing to outrage morality or religion.

Crumwell had followed Wolsey to Esher, "but finding," says Mr. Tytler, that, "the household of a fallen minister was no sphere for so restless a disposition, and under a veil of what, without any breach of charity, we may pronounce religious hypocrisy, he concealed a determined purpose to retrieve his fortunes and establish himself in favour with the king." It is at this moment that Cavendish, the affectionate biographer of his master, Wolsey, gives us this graphic picture of the aspiring adventurer: "It chanced me upon All-hallow-eeen day, to come into the great chamber at Esher, in the morning, to give my attendance, when I found Master Crumwell lean-

ing in the great window, with a primer in his hand, saying Our Lady's Matins: which would have been since a very strange sight. He prayed earnestly, and the tears trickled from his eyes. I bade him good morrow, saying: 'Why, master Crumwell, what means all this your sorrow? Is my lord in any danger, for whom you lament thus? or is it any loss ye have sustained by any misadventure?' 'Nay, nay,' quoth he, 'it is my unhappy adventure, which is like to lose me all that I have travailed for all the days of my life, for doing of my master true and diligent service.' 'Why, Sir,' quoth I, 'I trust ye are too wise to commit anything by my lord's commandment, otherwise than ye might do of right, whereby ye have any cause to doubt of loss of your goods.' 'Well, well,' quoth he, 'I cannot tell: but all that I see before mine eyes is as it is taken; and this I understand right well, that I am in djsdain with most men for my master's sake, and surely without just cause. Howbeit, an ill name once gotten, will not lightly be put away. I never had any promotion by my lord, to the increase of my living; and thus much will I say to you, that I intend, God willing, this afternoon, when my lord hath dined, to ride to London, and so to the court, where I will either make or mar, ere I come again.'"

There is no doubt that Crumwell was in correspondence with the confidants of Anne, and knew the critical situation in which their affairs stood. The very day, therefore, after the king's intention had transpired, he repaired to the court at Greenwich, where all had been arranged to gain him an audience with the king. Cardinal Pole, who had the account from Crumwell himself, and others who were present, relate that, upon this occasion, Crumwell suggested to the king a mode of overcoming the difficulty of the Pope's opposition to the divorce, by taking the authority into his own hands, and declaring himself head of the church within his own realm. These

ideas were entirely new to the king. When Crumwell had concluded his discourse, and stood with his eyes timidly fixed on the floor, Henry regarded him for a moment in silence, and then asked him if he could prove that these things were feasible. Crumwell raised his eyes modestly from the ground, and assured his Majesty that he could prove it all to his satisfaction. The king was satisfied, thanked the man whose logic was so convincing, and ordered him forthwith to be sworn of his privy-council.

1531. On the 7th of February, a bill was brought into the lords, in which was the following clause: "Acknowledging the king to be the protector and only supreme head of the church and clergy of England." It was only after long struggles that the good Warham and others could obtain the modification—"under God;" and finally that the clause should run as follows: "of which church and clergy, we acknowledge his majesty to be the chief protector, the only and supreme lord, and, *as far as the law of Christ will allow*, the supreme head." Crumwell rose successively to the offices of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of first secretary to the king. It only remained to crown his ambition by a title hitherto unheard of. He was appointed, according to the express terms of the patent, "royal vicegerent, vicar-general, and principal commissary, with all the spiritual authority belonging to the king as head of the church, for the due administration of justice, in all cases touching the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and the godly reformation and redress of all errors, heresies, and abuses in the said church." "Here, then," exclaims the zealous Roper, "we have the king, and the man commissioned by him, made sole judges in matters of faith, and all ecclesiastical discipline put into their hands. The commission given by our Saviour to his apostles, and their successors, is set aside by human law, and the authority they received

from heaven transferred upon the state. The care of souls is made to devolve upon the civil power, and the being of Christianity to depend upon the will of the magistrate!" He afterwards adds; "to show how much Henry triumphed in his new style and title, a medal was struck, on one side of which was his effigy, and on the reverse three inscriptions, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, commemorative of the event."*

March, 30. In order, as far as possible, to prevent the impression on the public mind likely to be produced by Clement's inhibitory brief, More, in his official capacity as Chancellor, attended by twelve of the peers, went down to the lower house; the answers of the universities were read, and a formidable pile of papers, said to contain the opinions of theologians and canonists, was exhibited. After the prorogation on the following day, several lords were deputed to wait on the queen, and to request that, for the quiet of the king's conscience, she would refer the matter to the decision of four temporal and four spiritual peers. "God grant him a quiet conscience," was the reply, "but this shall be your answer: I am his wife, lawfully married to him by order of the holy church; and so will I abide till the court of Rome, which was privy to the beginning, shall have made thereof an end." A second deputation was sent with an order for her to leave the palace at Windsor, "Go where I may," was her answer, "I shall still be his lawful wife." From that day Catharine and Henry never more saw each other. She repaired to the royal seat of the Moor,

* This gave occasion to a severe remark, which is embodied in the following epigram:—

"A fearful sacrilege we see,
Which fills good men with pain;
For lo! beneath inscriptions three,
Christ, in his Church's person, he
Has crucified again!"

thence to East-Hampstead, and at last fixed her residence at Ampthill, in Bedfordshire.*

It was about this period that More lost his father. After a long life of useful duties and unblemished integrity, Sir John More was gathered to his fathers at nearly the age of ninety. He had lived to see his son attain the highest honours in the kingdom to which a subject is eligible, and he was called away in time to be spared the pain of witnessing the cruelty and injustice by which he was to be pursued to the scaffold. Acquainted as the reader is with the heart of Sir Thomas, it is hardly necessary to tell him that, on this trying occasion, he gave the strongest proofs of filial affection; and that the old man breathed his last in his arms, cheered by his prayers and consoled by every tender office that love and religion can bestow.

Little, if any, increase of fortune accrued to More by his father's death. Sir John's last wife was still living, and she enjoyed the benefit of the greater portion of her husband's property. More, in his "Apology," has the following observations on this subject: "As for all the lands and fees that I have in all England, beside such lands and fees as I have of the gift of the king's most noble grace, is not at this day, nor shall be while my mother-in-law lives (whose life and good health I pray God may keep and continue) worth yearly to my living, the sum of full fifty pounds." From such data as these we may estimate the value of More's charities, of his liberal spirit, and his contempt of wealth.

In the meantime, the situation of Sir Thomas grew daily more embarrassing. The high offices to which he had been raised by the king, the marked degree of personal favour hitherto shown to him, and the natural tendency of his gentle and

* "In days of old here Ampthill's towers were seen,
The mournful refuge of an injured queen."—*Scott*.

amiable disposition, combined to disincline him to resist, as far as the utmost limits of his conscience would allow, the wishes of his friendly master. On the other hand, his deep sense of religion, and his reverence for the authority of the church, made him view with suspicion and alarm the conduct of Henry, and those designs which were visibly tending towards a rupture with the Roman See, the great centre of Catholic unity. Together with these loftier principles, he was at the same time influenced by the humane feelings of his just and generous nature, which engaged his heart to espouse the cause of a blameless and wronged princess, driven from the throne and from the bed of a tyrannical husband. Nor can it be forgotten that More had been admitted to the family privacy, the fire-side intimacies of the king and queen, and consequently had every opportunity of seeing and appreciating the many virtues and estimable qualities of this best of women.*

"In steering his course through the intrigues and passions of the court," we quote Sir J. Mackintosh, "it is very observable that More most warily retired from every opposition but that which conscience absolutely required: he shunned unnecessary disobedience as much as unconscientious compliance. If he had been influenced solely by prudential considerations, he could not have more cautiously shunned every needless opposition; but in that case he would not have gone so far. He displayed, at the time of which we now speak, that very peculiar excellence of his character, which, as it showed his

* Of her
That, like a jewel, has hung twenty years
About his neck, yet never lost her lustre;
Of her that loves him with that excellence
Which angels love good men with; e'en of her
That, when the greatest stroke of fortune falls,
Will bless the king.—

SHAKESPEARE, *Henry VIII.*

submission to be the fruit of sense of duty, gave dignity to that which in others is apt to seem and to be slavish."

The anxieties of More increased with the approach towards the execution of the king's projects of divorce and second marriage. Some anecdotes of this period are preserved by the affectionate and descriptive pen of Margaret Roper's husband, which, as he evidently reports in the chancellor's language, it would be unpardonable to relate in any other words than those of the venerable man himself.

We have already seen that the banks of the Thames, in front of Sir Thomas's residence, was his favourite promenade after the business of the day. His son-in-law Roper was frequently the companion of his walk. On one of these occasions after his return from his duties at court, he thus addressed his son-in-law, in a tone of more than usual earnestness: "Now, would to our Lord, son Roper, upon condition that three things were well established in Christendom, I were put into a sack, and were presently cast into the Thames."—"What great things be those, sir," quoth I, "that should move you so to wish?"—"In faith, son, they be these," said he. "The *first* is, that, whereas the most part of Christian princes be at mortal war, they were all at universal peace. The *second*, that, whereas the church of Christ is at present sore afflicted with many errors and heresies, it were well settled in perfect uniformity of religion. The *third*, that, as the matter of the king's marriage is now come in question, it were, to the glory of God and quietness of all parties, brought to a good conclusion."

On another occasion, as he was proceeding in his barge to Westminster, to attend to his official duties, the following scene took place between him, and his faithful servant, John Harris. When the weather was fair, Sir Thomas used to read the whole way, for, when against the tide, it was a good hour's row;

and in the economy of his duties this hour was important. On the morning in question, he had taken with him a volume of St. Thomas Aquinas, being no doubt at this time engaged on some of his controversial pieces. On a sudden turning to Harris, and pointing with his finger to the volume, he exclaimed :—"Look here, Harris ; only see how that fellow Luther has been picking his arguments out of St. Thomas's objections ; but then the knave has not had the common honesty to say a word of the solutions, which follow close by."*

It is said of Molière, that, previous to the production of any of his pieces, he used to read them over to a good old housekeeper of his, in order to remark the effect produced upon her plain unsophisticated judgment ; in the same manner would More avail himself of the good strong common sense of Harris. "Yea," says Roper, "though Sir Thomas was most wise and dexterous in discovering truth from falsehood, and virtue from cloaked-up vice, yet would he frequently, in his greatest affairs and studies, ask his man Harris his advice and counsel ; and, if he thought his judgment better, would willingly submit to his opinion ; choosing rather to be in all things at the discretion of other men, than at his own guiding, desirous in all his actions to exercise the chief of all Christian virtues, obedience and

* How much truth is there in this remark of Sir Thomas ; nor was it in his time alone that such unworthy arts were resorted to ; the knaves of whom he speaks are to be found in all voluminous manufacturers of abuse against the Catholic Church, from Tindall to Southey, whose whole ground of argument is picked from the objections of St. Thomas, and based solely on *abuses*, which every honest Catholic laments as sincerely as his adversary. It has been the trick of the scribes in question to underrate and abuse St. Thomas, in order to throw the hunters of knowledge off the scent, lest their petty larcenies should be detected. Thus "the solemn and neglected riddles of Thomas Aquinas," is the expression of a fashionable writer of this tribe : those things are riddles to us which we cannot comprehend, and precisely in this predicament is the scribbler of the above. Men capable of appreciating the merits of this wonderful man, have done justice to his immense learning, and his commanding intellect. We cite with pleasure the historian of The Middle Ages.

humility." We learn from Cresacre, that More afterwards raised this honest man to the place of his private secretary; for, he adds, Harris was a person of sound judgment and great piety.*

On another occasion, Sir Thomas was returning in his barge, after having dined at the house of a merchant in the city. His water-bailiff, a trusty servant, having heard certain persons, who were tinctured with the new opinions, rail severely against Sir Thomas, because he was a determined opponent of the Lutheran doctrines, "waxed sore discontented therewith, knowing well that his good master little deserved any evil report." He, therefore, took an opportunity, when they were seated in the barge, to report to his master the disagreeable things he had heard; and he added, with a significant motion of the head; and "And were I, Sir, in such high favour and authority with my prince as you are, such men should not so villainously and falsely misrepresent and slander me. Therefore, will you not do well, Sir, to call them before you, and punish them to their shame for their undeserved malice?"

Sir Thomas, smiling at his honest warmth, replied: "Why, Mr. Water-bailiff, and would you have me punish those by whom I reap more benefit than by all you that are my friends? Let them, in God's name, speak as loudly of me as they list, and shoot never so many bolts at me; so long as they hit me not, what am I the worse? True it is, that, should they once hit me, then would it not a little grieve me; howbeit, I trust by God's grace and help, there shall none of them all be able to touch me. And this believe, that

* Harris is immortalized in the celebrated picture of the More family by Holbein, of which we have already spoken. He is represented in the same group with More's son, with this inscription over his head "*Johannes Harresius Thomæ Mori famulus.*"

"If you find a good servant, look upon him under no severer aspect than that of a humble friend; the difference between such a one and his master, residing rather in fortune than in nature."—SIR FRANCIS OSBORNE'S *Advice to his Son.*

I have more cause to pity than to be angry with them."

The following is an instance of the happy way in which More could parry an adversary's blow. A member of the house of Manners had ingratiated himself into the king's favour, and had been raised to a post of honour. He had formerly been one of Sir Thomas's friends, but "perceiving that the world began somewhat to frown upon him, because he was not so forward as other men to egg on the divorce," and hinting that More was ungrateful for the king's favours, said to him in a sarcastic tone: "Even so as the old proverb is, *Honores mutant mores*."—"Yes," replied More, with that sparkle of the eye that announced a good thing, "the proverb is most apt, but only translate it rightly, for *mores* is *manners*." Sir Thomas was not attacked in that quarter again.

The recent task which we have seen More perform, and to which he was compelled by his official situation, must have done violence to his nature. In laying before the Commons the opinions of the universities, which were, in fact, so many outrages upon the feelings of the Queen, whom he so much loved and respected, he was compelled to recite a tale, which could have afforded him but little satisfaction in the telling. His contempt of worldly greatness was too strong to allow him to hold even the highest station, subject to the violation of his conscience; and it requires but little knowledge of More's character, not to see that he would take measures to prevent his being exposed to the repetition of an act that had conflicted with his principles. Accordingly, we find him shortly after applying to his particular friend, the Duke of Norfolk, to intercede with his royal master, that he might be permitted to resign the seal. A complaint in his breast, arising from too assiduous an application to business, was the reason assigned by him, for his resignation, as

well to the duke, as to the friends with whom he corresponded. But Norfolk knew too well the value of More's services to the king in the situation which he filled, to make such a proposal, till after much importunity on the part of the knight; and Henry, anxious as he might feel to exchange the rigid honesty of More for something more pliant and yielding to his purposes, had the decency not to accept the resignation tendered, till after repeated solicitation. At length, however, the king's consent was obtained, and More waited upon his Majesty by appointment, to deliver up the seal, having held it just two years and seven months. Hall, the court chronicler, thus records the circumstance: "Sir Thomas More, Chancellor of England, after long suits made to the king, to be discharged of that office, on the 15th day of May, delivered to the king, at Westminster, the great seal of England, and was with the king's favour discharged; which seal the king kept till Whitsunday following, and the Monday in Whitsun week, he dubbed Thomas Audley, Speaker of the Parliament, Knight, and made him lord keeper of the great seal."

As the successor of More will, in the sequel, be seen to take an active part against him, we may be allowed to say a few words, in passing, on his conduct and character. Some estimate of the latter may be formed from documents that have come to light in "The State Papers," and which do not place him in a point of view favourable to a comparison with his predecessor in office. The following passages will exhibit his conduct in strong contrast with the severe integrity and manly independence of Sir Thomas. There is a letter of his to Secretary Crumwell, in which, after stating "that his debts troubled him sore," he adds: "I am afraid to require any thing of the king's grace, he hath been so good lord to me; but, Sir, if by your means, it might please the king's grace to give me that poor house, I

once told you of, that late belonged to Christ's church, a little from London, with the lands and pastures thereunto belonging, which exceeds not 20 mark a year; and also that his grace would, of his goodness, pay me that £100 due to me, and lend me £600, upon good sureties. I pray you burn this letter, or keep it secret, for therein my necessity appeareth, which I would that all should not know."

In another letter dated the same year (1533) is the following: "*Bruits* [reports] have run concerning the dissolution of the Abbey of St. John, Colchester, and of St. Oswyth, and I am bold to write to your lordship after my old suit. I beseech you, my lord, if your lordship should think this suit honourable and reasonable, to move this matter to the king's majesty, and to set it earnestly forward. I trouble you with my suits often, and cannot recompense you for the gentleness and pains taken for me; but if you can or may obtain this suit, your lordship *shall have for your favour therein* £200."

This bribe is offered in so cool and business-like a tone, that it is not difficult to conjecture that there was nothing novel to Crumwell in transactions of this kind. The editor of the State Papers, from which this is taken, drily remarks: "Crumwell was not tempted by this bribe: he obtained the Abbey for himself."

Marillac, the French ambassador, terms Audley *un grand vendeur de justice*—a great barterer of justice. (*Le Grand*, I. 224.)

CHAPTER VII.

1532—1534. *ÆTAT.* 54.

MORE IN HIS RETIREMENT—NEW DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS—HIS POVERTY—OFFERING OF THE BISHOPS—ACCUSATION AND APOLOGY—CRANMER—MARRIAGE OF HENRY AND ANNE BOLEYN—THE NUN OF KENT—BISHOP FISHER—MORE ACCUSED OF MISPRISION OF TREASON—STATUTES OF SUCCESSION AND ALLEGIANCE—MORE REFUSES THE OATH—COMMITTED TO THE TOWER.

The spirit in which More resigns his honours, and retires to Chelsea—Anecdote—More describes his feelings to Erasmus—Composes a monumental Inscription for himself—New domestic arrangements—His poverty—Offering made him by the Bishops—He is accused of bribery—Devotes his leisure to study, and composes his Apology and other works—Rise of Cranmer—He is made Archbishop of Canterbury—Pronounces the divorce—Marriage of Henry with Anne Boleyn—Coronation of Anne—More declines an invitation to the ceremony—Firmness of Queen Catharine to the last—Final separation of England from the communion of the Catholic Church—Elizabeth Barton, the nun of Kent—Her execution—Prosecution of Bishop Fisher—His letter to Crumwell on his inhuman treatment in the Tower—More is implicated together with Fisher—Writes on this subject to Crumwell and the King—He is accused of misprision of treason—Is examined before the commission—His firmness—Henry is made Head of the Church—Is at the zenith of power, civil and ecclesiastical—Its effect upon his character and conduct—Statutes of succession and allegiance—More refuses to take the oath—He is cited to appear before the commission at Lambeth—His account of his examination, in a letter to his daughter Margaret—Is placed in

the custody of the Abbot of Westminster—Cranmer's argument and letter on qualifying the oath—The King disposed to adopt Cranmer's suggestion, but prevented by the influence of the Boleyn party—The oath tendered to More unqualified, and refused by him—His committal to the Tower—Anecdotes.

MORE descended from his high station with more joy and alacrity than others feel in entering upon the envied honours of office. The possession of these honours instead of corrupting, had but disciplined his heart;* by their removal, he felt his mind relieved from a weight that had oppressed it, and rejoiced at being able to breathe again in freedom. When his friends manifested their sorrow on his descent from grandeur, he smiled at their unnecessary solicitude, and made them ashamed of sacrificing a moment's cheerfulness at the view of an occurrence, which those acquainted with the uncertain tenure of worldly honours, should ever be prepared to encounter.

He gave a proof of this temper of his mind in the characteristic manner in which he announced his resignation to his lady. He had given up the seals on the preceding day, which was Saturday, and on the Sunday morning he accompanied his family to Chelsea church. During his chancellorship, one of More's attendants had been in the habit, after the church-service was over, of going to his lady's pew to inform her that my Lord had gone on before. On this occasion, Sir Thomas came to the pew himself, cap in hand, and making a low bow, said to her with perfect gravity—"Madame, *my Lord is gone!*" Accustomed to his playful manner, "for he used many jests unto her upon all occasions," his lady imagined this to be one of his wonted jokes, and took

* "There is no surer sign of a worthy and genuine spirit, than when honours amend a man: for their natural tendency is to corrupt."—*Lord Bacon*.

I'll find my conquest in a safe retreat;
While others rise, I'll sink to be as great.

Sir Robt. Howard.

little or no notice of it at the time. But when, on reaching home, he informed her seriously that he had resigned the seal, she flew into a passion outright. That she was worldly-minded, we have already had occasion to see, and the present moment would naturally call that feeling into action. "Tilly vally!* what will you do," quoth she, her temper rising, "what will you do, that you list not to put yourself forward like other folks? Will you sit still by the fire, and as children do, make goslings in the ashes with a stick? Would to God, that I were a man, and look ye then what I would do!" "Why, Alice," quoth Sir Thomas, "and what wouldst thou do?"—"What!" quoth she, "why, marry! go forward with the best of them all. For, as my mother was wont to say—God rest her soul!—it is ever better to rule than to be ruled. Therefore, by heavens, I warrant that I would not be so foolish as to be ruled, where I might rule."—"By my troth, wife," said Sir Thomas, "I know that to be a rule thou wert always fain to abide by."—"And so would any one," rejoined Alice, "who has a particle of spirit."

Finding that his lady was determined to have the last word, the facetious knight called his daughters, and asked them if they could espy any thing strange in their mother's appearance. Alice, imagining it was something wrong in the adjustment of her dress, turned herself about for the daughters to examine. "Oh, it is not that," said Sir Thomas, laughing; "don't you perceive that your mother's nose standeth

* Sir J. Mackintosh seems puzzled about this word. It was a common exclamation of this and Shakspeare's day, in whose plays it occurs more than once. From a collection of ancient poems, published with a translation, in 1600, it would appear to be of Cornish origin. One of the poems is a dialogue on the subject of Cain and Abel. In reply to a question, whether he was not sorry for having killed his brother, Cain replies:

"Tily vally! nynyges yadrage thymo whath."

Which is translated:

"Tittle tattle! nothing am I sorry for that."

somewhat awry?" This was too bad, and the offended dame shut herself up in her own room—the very thing that Sir Thomas wanted.

It will, perhaps, be said, that trifles like these are scarcely worth recording in the life of so great a man. But it may be observed, that the characters of men are frequently best learnt from circumstances apparently trifling. Anecdotes like these are better calculated to show us More as he was, than the most elaborate descriptions. They also prove that his humour was natural to him, and wholly untinged by singularity or affectation; and at the same time convince us, that riches, honours, and power had no charms for him, and that he could disencumber himself of them with a jest upon his lips.

In More's Latin works are two letters which he wrote to Erasmus, at this period. They contain some interesting passages respecting Sir Thomas, which are here translated.

"The thing, my dear Desiderius, which I have most wished for from my very boyhood, and which I rejoice in your having always enjoyed, and myself occasionally—namely, that being free from public business, I might have some time to devote to God and myself; and this by the goodness of Heaven and the favour of an indulgent prince, I have at last obtained: I have not, however, obtained it as I could have wished. For my desire was to have reached the last stage of existence in a state, which, though suitable to my years, might yet have enabled me to enjoy the remainder of my days strong in health and unbroken by age, free from disease and with a mind undistracted by pain. It remaineth in the hand of God whether this wish of mine, unreasonable as perhaps it is, shall be accomplished. Meantime, a disorder of I know not what nature has attacked my breast, by which I suffer less in present pain, than in fear of the consequences. For when it had annoyed me for some months

without abatement, the physicians whom I consulted, gave their opinion that its continuance was dangerous, and rendered the prospect of cure less probable: the only remedy must be the gradual effects of time, proper diet, and medicine. Finding that they were unable to fix a period for my recovery, or, indeed, to ensure me a perfect cure at all, I saw that I must either lay down my office, or discharge my duty in it little to my satisfaction. And since I could not discharge that duty without some hazard of my life, and by so doing should lose both life and office, I determined to lose one of them rather than both. Wherefore, that I might consult the public good, as well as my own welfare, I entreated his Highness, the Prince, that he would release me from the high office with which his great favour had honoured me, far above my hopes, my wishes, and my pretensions, sinking as I was under the weight of the same. I pray Heaven to reward his Majesty for those favours towards me; that the remainder of life allotted me may not be spent in inglorious and slothful repose, but that, together with the disposition, strength of body may be given me, to employ it profitably. For, under bad health, I am not equal to any thing. It is not all the world that are like Erasmus, to whom Heaven would seem to have granted an exclusive privilege. For who but yourself could dare to promise what you accomplish?—you, who are not hindered by the inconveniences of growing age, and though afflicted by such maladies as youth and strength ordinarily sink before, yet do you not cease from year to year to instruct mankind by your excellent writings, as if age and ill-health could rob nothing from you.”

It was during this interval that, with an eye calmly and steadily fixed on the prospect before him, he erected a monument for himself in the church of Chelsea, with an inscription recounting the most

prominent incidents of his life.* He thus speaks of it in one of his letters to Erasmus: "Certain praters had begun to give it out here, that though I dissembled my sentiments, I in reality gave up my office unwillingly. I am determined to represent the matter as it really was, and, for that purpose, I have set about my monument, for which I have been composing an epitaph, in which I will confute these insinuations—for, if one can do so, it is surely myself. In pronouncing upon my late conduct, though they could not tax me with falsehood, they did not acquit me of a certain degree of arrogance. I choose this method, to prevent these misrepresentations from gaining credit; assuredly, not on my own account, for I little heed what men say, so God but approve. But since I had written some books in our mother tongue, in favour of certain disputed tenets of ours, I conceived that it behoved me to defend the integrity of my character. And that you may know how arrogantly I have written, I enclose you the said epitaph, in which you will see how little disposed I am to compliment these men. I have now waited a due time for suffrages on my official conduct, but, as yet, no one has stepped forward to challenge my integrity. I must have been very innocent, or very much upon my guard; and if my adversaries will not give me credit for the one, they must for the other.† The king himself has declared his sentiments on the subject oftentimes in private, and twice in public. For when my successor took his seat, his Majesty commanded the Duke of Norfolk, High-Treasurer of England, to bear honourable testimony

* This monument, which still remains entire and undefaced, is situated on the south side of the chancel. For the inscription see *Appendix* No. 2, to the present volume.

† To an Athenian, who, in praising a public functionary, had said, that every one either applauded him or left him without censure, a philosopher replied—"How seldom, then, must he have done his duty!"

of me, even more than my modesty will allow me to repeat, and to say that he most unwillingly accepted the resignation that I tendered him, and only after repeated entreaties. And not content with this, he caused the same thing to be repeated in his presence, a considerable time afterwards in the speech made by my successor in the Commons."

Settled quietly down in the retreat of his beloved Chelsea, he seems to have breathed once again. Hear him pour out his heart to a friend: "These great fortunes lift a man up high, and set him above the show; but oftentimes like a fierce and skittish horse, they will cast their master. The golden mediocrity, the mean estate, is the thing to be desired, which shall bear us up, as it were, in hands more easily; which shall obey us, and not we it. I, therefore, abiding firmly in this opinion, set greater store by my little house, my study, the pleasure of my books, my family, and the rest and the peace of my mind, than by all your king's palaces, all your common business, all your glory, all the advantages that we hawk after, all the favour of the court. I look for other fruit of my study: that I may bring forth the children that I travail on, that I may give out some books of mine own, to the common profit, which may somewhat favour, if not of *cunning* [knowledge], at the leastwise of wit and diligence!" It is painful to reflect that More's dream of happiness was to be of short duration, and these literary projects of his a mere Utopian vision.

It cannot but seem strange, that the king should permit a favourite minister of his to retire with nothing but barren expressions of esteem, and not have the generosity to make some provision for the supply of his wants. And yet that such was the fact, we learn from Sir Thomas's son-in-law, as well as from circumstances which we shall have to detail.

"As his grace," says Roper, "courteously received

the seal from his hands, with thanks and praise for his worthy service in that office, so it pleased his highness further to say to him, that, for the service he had before done him, he should, in any suit he might hereafter have unto him, which should either concern his *honour*,—for that word it pleased his highness to use unto him, or which should regard his interests, find his highness a good and gracious lord unto him.” Roper adds, and he speaks as one interested in the result, “how true the words proved, let others be judges, when the king not only did not bestow upon him the value of one penny, but afterwards took from him and his posterity all that ever had been either given by him, left him by his father, or purchased by himself.”

More would appear to have been born in the same age with Wolsey, in order to exhibit a striking contrast to his conduct on almost all occasions. When we read of the cardinal’s immense wealth on his retiring from the chancellorship and the splendid establishment which he kept up, and then look at More in his honourable poverty, he rises proportionably in our estimation. We quote the words of his son-in-law: “I am well assured that all the land he ever purchased before he was lord chancellor, was not above the value of twenty marks* by the year, and, after his debts were paid, he had not, to my knowledge, (his chain of office excepted), left him in gold and silver the worth of one hundred pounds.” Surely, observes Cresacre, it is a rare thing to be said, that one of the king’s council, who had gone through many offices for nearly twenty years, should not be able to purchase one hundred pounds in land, when now-a-days, a private attorney, by his own practice, will leave his children five hundred pounds, or more of land in inheritance. He attributes the fact of Sir Thomas’s admirable contempt of worldly interests to the bounteous hand which was ever open

* The mark was a silver coin of the value of 13s. 4d.

so liberally to the poor, to his own kinsfolk, his family, and his friends, as well as to that spirit of the old hospitality which Sir Thomas loved to cherish, and also to his liberality to the church.

The bishops were not ignorant of the fact, that, notwithstanding the favour of the king, More was a poor man, and they came to a determination which it is delightful to record. They, together with the leading men of the clergy, agreed in one of their convocations, to recompense him with a sum of money raised among them, supposed to have been to the amount of about five thousand pounds, a splendid offering in those days. The bishops of Bath, Durham, and Exeter, (Drs. Clarke, Tunstall, and Hussey), waited upon him in consequence, and tendered him the sum in question in the name of the convocation; they said that "they had weighed with themselves what pains and travail he had taken in writing many learned books in defence of the Catholic faith, against the errors secretly disseminated abroad in the realm; that it was to their pastoral charge the care of these interests principally appertained, and yet that there had not been a single clergyman who had matched his writings either in the extent of the volumes, the soundness of the argument, or in the happy result produced. That, therefore, they held themselves bound to consider him for the pains he had taken, and the zeal he had shown to discharge them in God's quarrel; that they were well aware they could not requite him according to his merits—that must be left to the goodness of God: and yet taking into consideration that his estate was not equal to his worth, they had been deputed by the whole convocation, to beg his acceptance of this sum, as a small testimony of their sense of the obligations they owed him, and which they hoped he would accept according to the spirit in which it was presented." This, says More's grandson, was a beautiful deed in respect to the prelates

who made the offering, but little knew they Sir Thomas's magnificent disposition. He offered them his grateful acknowledgments, but refused the present. "It is no small comfort to me (said he) that men so wise and learned accept so well of my simple doings. But I never purposed to receive any reward, save from the hands of God alone: from Him, the giver of all good gifts, came the means that I have used to defend his cause, and to Him alone are the thanks to be ascribed. I give my most humble and hearty thanks to your lordships, for your so bountiful and so friendly consideration; but I must beg you to hold me excused from receiving anything at your hands." And when, continues his grandson, "they still pressed it upon him with so great importunity, that few could have supposed he would have had the resolution to persist in the refusal, they could not, for all that, prevail any whit upon him. They then varied their mode of assault, and besought him that, at least, he would not deny their bestowing it upon his wife and children." "Not so, my lords," said the knight, "not so; ye shall not steal a march upon me thus. I had rather see it cast into the Thames, than that either I or any of mine should have thereof the worth of a single penny. For although your offer, my lords, be indeed very friendly and honourable, yet I set so much by my pleasure and so little by my profit, that I would not, in good faith, for a much greater sum than yours, have lost the value of so many nights' sleep as was spent upon the same. And yet, for all that, I could well wish, that, upon condition all heresies were suppressed, all my works were burned, and my labour utterly lost."

Sir J. Mackintosh observes, that "he spoke this not from any boastful pride, which was most foreign to his nature, but as shrinking with a sort of instinctive delicacy from the touch of money, even before he considered how much the acceptance of the gift

might impair his usefulness." And thus, continues Cresacre, the bishops were fain to depart, and return to every one his own again. And by this his virtuous answer, and the firmness of his conduct, every one may see, that all his solicitude was for God's greater honour, and not for any vain glory or more earthly interests.

The reformers, upon the watch to find something that would tell against their untiring opponent, circulated a report from the above circumstance, that More had been bribed by the clergy to write against them; "measuring," says Cresacre, "other men by the standard of their own covetous humours." In his "Apology," which More published shortly after, he has the following passage on this subject. "I will not say nay, but that some good and honourable men among them [the clergy] would, in reward of my good will and my labour against these heretics, have given me much more than ever I did, or could, deserve. But I dare take God and them also to record, that all of them could never fee me one penny thereof; but, as I plainly told them, that I would rather have cast their money into the Thames than take it. For albeit there were among them, as indeed there were, both good men and honourable, yet look I for my thanks from God, who is their better, and for whose sake I take the labour, and not for theirs. I am not yet altogether so virtueless, but that of my own natural disposition, without any special or peculiar help of grace thereto, I am both over-proud and over-slothful too, to be hired for money to take half the labour and business in writing, that I have taken in this *gear* [matter] since I began." (*Works*, p. 867.)

Surely, if the king had been possessed of any sensibility, he must have felt the conduct of the bishops as the severest of all libels upon his conduct. But Henry's growing selfishness had shut his heart against feelings of this kind. When his impure

passion was to be catered for, we have seen him profuse enough of the royal purse; but there was nothing in the purity and integrity of More to interest his feelings as a man, or awaken his sympathy to his former friend.

More's resources were of a nobler nature. The simplicity of his tastes and the moderation of his indulgences rendered retrenchment a task so easy to himself, as to be scarcely perceptible in his personal habits. His fool or jester, then a necessary part of a great man's establishment, he sent home to his family.* His first care was to provide for his attendants, by placing his gentlemen and yeomen with peers and prelates, and his eight watermen in the service of his successor, Sir T. Audley, to whom he gave his great barge, one of the most indispensable appendages of his office in an age when carriages were unknown. His sorrows were for separation from those whom he loved. He called together his children and grandchildren, who had hitherto lived in peace and love under the patriarchal roof, and, lamenting that he could not as he was used, and as he gladly would, bear out the whole charges of them all himself, and continue living together as they were wont, he prayed them to give him their counsel on this trying occasion. When he saw them silent, and unwilling to risk an opinion, he gave them his, seasoned with his natural gaiety, and containing some strokes illustrative of the state of society at that time. "I have been brought up," quoth he, "at Oxford, at an inn of Chancery, at Lincoln's Inn, and also in the king's court: from the lowest degree to the highest, and yet I have at present left but little above 100l. a year (including the king's grants); so

* Lord Herbert informs us, that "he bestowed his fool on the Lord Mayor, during his term of office, and afterwards on his successors in that charge." But Roper's account, which is that of the text, is more in keeping with the known humanity of More's character; and so far as his father-in-law's domestic arrangements are in question, his statement may surely be credited in preference to that of the noble historian.

that now, if we like to live together, we must be content to be contributaries together; but we must not fall to the lowest fare first. We will begin with Lincoln's Inn diet, where many right worshipful and of good years do live full well; which, if we find not ourselves the first year able to maintain, then will we the next year go one step to New Inn fare; if that year exceed our ability, we will the next year descend to Oxford fare,* wherewith many grave, learned and ancient fathers are continually conversant. If our ability stretch not to maintain either, then may we with bag and wallets go a begging together, and, hoping for charity, sing a *Salve regina* at every man's door, and so still keep company and be merry together."

"It was a thing for men to wonder at," says Cresacre, "that whereas More was taken by the king into his service from a very worshipful living of four hundred pounds by the year, to deal in the greatest and weightiest causes that concerned his highness and the realm; and though Sir Thomas had spent with painful cares, travels, and troubles, as well beyond the seas as within the kingdom, in effect, the whole substance of his life; yet with all the gain he got thereby—being never himself a wasteful spender—he was unable, after the resignation

* If the following description given by Thomas Lever (1550), in a discourse at St. Paul's Cross, be correct, the fare was hard enough in all conscience. "There be diverse there that rise between four and five in the morning, and remain until six in prayer in the common chapel. At ten o'clock they go to dinner, at which they are content with a penny piece of beef among four, having a potage made of the broth of the same beef, with salt and oatmeal, and nothing else. After this slender dinner, they are teaching or learning till five in the evening, when they have a supper not better than their dinner. Immediately after which they go to reasoning in problems, or to some other study till nine or ten; and then being without fire, are fain to walk or run up and down for half an hour, to beget a heat in the feet, when they go to bed. Yet these be men not weary of their pains; but very sorry to leave their studies." "The scholars' means," says old Fuller in his quaint way, "were short, and their fare was hard. But the effect of it was this,—that as they were lean, so they were lively, enduring much labour, attracting less envy, and procuring much love." "The college bear," he adds, "is raw, small and windy."

of his office, to find for himself and those that belonged to him, sufficient meat, drink, fuel, apparel, and such needful charges. As such was the case, his children went to their own livings, all but my uncle Roper and my aunt, who lived in the house next unto him."

The following is added in a second manuscript Life of More, in the Lambeth collection. "After the resignation of his office of Chancellor, he was not able for the maintenance of himself and such as belonged to him, sufficiently to find meat, drink, fuel, apparel, and such other necessities; but was compelled for lack of other fuel in the winter time, before he went to bed, to cause a great bundle of fern to be brought into his own chamber, and with the blaze thereof to warm himself, his wife, and children, and so without any other fire to go to their beds."

More, in one of his letters to Erasmus, had congratulated himself, that no one had stepped forward to challenge his integrity. It was not long before there were found beings hardy enough for the task.* The most officious and malignant scrutiny was exercised, with a view to discover some ground of accusation against him; and now it was that he found the true value of his innocence and integrity. Had he not acted with the utmost probity in the high office he filled, and kept his hands pure from corruption, the slightest matter would have been gladly laid hold of to crush him. This was sufficiently evident

* "The world," More used to say, "is ungrateful: not only does it rarely recompense the good turns that we do it, but misrepresents our plainest actions. But, indeed, were the world as grateful as it might, it could never recompense a good action; that awaits a higher reward." Of the ungrateful he says in another place: "That they wrote the best deeds done them in dust, but the smallest injuries in marble."

Shakspeare has taken this image. In reply to Queen Catharine's reproaches of Cardinal Wolsey, Griffith says:

Noble madam,
Men's evil manners live in brass; their virtues
We write in water.

in the instance of a man of the name of Parnell, who was induced to come forward with a complaint that Sir Thomas had pronounced a decree against him in the Court of Chancery at the suit of one Vaughan, and that he had been biassed in pronouncing judgment by the bribe of a large silver gilt cup, presented to him by the wife of the said Vaughan. Upon this accusation he was summoned to appear before the council, at which Lord Wiltshire, father to Anne Boleyn, presided. When charged by the witness with the fact in question, he readily acknowledged that as such a cup had been brought him as a New Year's gift, long *after* the decree was made, he had not refused to take it. On hearing this, the eyes of the president of the council glistened with delight; he could not restrain his emotions, but exclaimed: "There, my lords, did I not tell you that you would find this matter true!" Sir Thomas quietly observed, that, as they had been pleased courteously to hear one part of the story, they would impartially listen to the other. This being granted, he declared that, "Though after much solicitation, he did indeed receive the cup, yet immediately sending for his butler, he ordered him to fill it with wine, of which when Mrs. Vaughan had drank, he pledged her in return; and then, as freely as her husband had given it to him, even so freely he gave the same to her again, to present to her husband as her New Year's gift; and which she received, though with some reluctance, and carried back with her again." To the truth of this the woman herself, and others there present, deposed, and a smile was on the face of all the council, except the president, who lost no time in withdrawing from the chamber. To use an expression of More's, "Men's accusations are oftentimes very hot and violent: but a very cool tale follows, when the simple truth is known."

Sir Thomas now withdrew his attention altogether from public affairs, and devoted his leisure to study

and devotion. He completed different controversial works which he had begun during his chancellorship, and gave them to the public. To this period belong his celebrated "Apology," the second part of his "Reply to Tindall," the treatise entitled "The Debellation of Salem and Byzance," and a reply in five books to an anonymous treatise, called "The Supper of the Lord." These works show the extent of More's learning, and his tact in polemic warfare; and have often been resorted to by later divines, as arsenals stored with materials for the defence of the faith. How far wit and humour are suitable weapons in a contest involving interests so solemn and important, we shall not stop to examine; but if it be allowed the champion of truth to employ them, certain it is that More has wielded them with vigour and address. The contrast between the lighter warfare, and the solemn and touching passages which stand in juxta position, has a very singular effect. Take an example or two. He has a well-conducted argument, terminating in the following forcible sentence: "Therefore, to tell me to leave the truth as taught in the known church, and seek it in an unknown, is to persuade me to renounce the light of the sun in order to pick my way by a rush-light." This is immediately succeeded by the following apt, but whimsical illustration:

"Now-a-days, there are almost as many sects as there are men, and not one agreeth with the other. Hence, to try and learn the right way of them, is much the same as if a man, walking in a deep forest, would fain find the way to the town for which he is making, and should inquire of a parcel of lewd mocking knaves, who, when the bewildered man had prayed them to tell him the way, should get them into a *roundel*, [circle], turning them back to back, and then speaking all at once, should each one cry 'This way!' pointing with his finger in the direction of his nose." (p. 707.)

After a solemn warning to Tindall against relapse into error, and his inconsistency in allowing that to be truth to-day which he will disavow to-morrow, he breaks off as follows: "Though he confessed it before, yet would he now secretly steal back again, not willingly, peradventure, but that the Old One pulleth him back by his coat-skirt unawares." (p. 569.)

His illustrations are frequently very whimsical.

"He writeth well and fluently, and in reading his books this is the effect:—the tale is all very well as long as it is telling, and goeth as fair and as smooth over a man's ear as the water goeth over a goose's back: but let the water tarry still for a time, and it will even go well to the skin." (p. 756.)

"So long as Tindall trieth his logic *sadly* [seriously], it may be endured, but his merriment is sadder still: he jesteth as adroitly as a camel danceth." (p. 760.)

"When I tell him of Christ's promise that he would leave behind him a spouse, his Church, without spot or wrinkle, and yet that from his exposition it would appear otherwise; he equivocates, he scuds in and out like a hare with a dozen brace of greyhounds after her, and finally he slinks slyly away by saying, that the Church ever had spots and wrinkles of sin, and yet for all that the Church of Christ is very pure and clean, because abiding in the knowledge of her spots and wrinkles, and asking mercy for them, God layeth none of them to her charge. I know not what to make of a church pure and clean, and yet with spots and wrinkles both. I had as lieve he had told us, that if there were a woman with a crooked nose, yet as long as no man tell her of it, so long her nose stood straight." (p. 750.)

"The common received belief of Christ's universal Church is argument enough for the simple Catholic. For, as if a sophister with a fond argument should prove to a simple soul, that two eggs were three, be-

cause there is one, and there are twain ; now, one and twain make three : yet the simple unlearned man, though he lack logic to foil his fond argument, yet hath wit enough to laugh thereat, and, eating the two eggs himself, to bid the sophister take and eat the third. So is every faithful man as sure in the sight of his own soul, how speciously soever an adversary argue from Scripture against his faith, that what he is taught is true ; it being true because taught him by the Church, whom the Spirit of God leads into all the truth." (p. 650.)

One other extract, and we have done.

"In reasoning with one of Luther's progeny, who was more zealous than well-read, I told him I had a witness in my favour whom I would produce. 'Who is it?' quoth he ; and when I named Origen, he shrunk back and said ; 'I had rather go many a good mile about than meet with that man. It is the same that Bishop Fisher brought in against a friend of mine, and he told me he could not stand against him, so right cunning a man was he ;' and he ended by asking me whether the man were not a stranger in these parts."

What follows is too curious to be omitted.

"Tindall asks me, why I have not contended with Erasmus, whom he calleth my darling, for all this long while, for translating this word *ecclesia* into *congregatio*. And then he cometh forth with this right proper taunt, that I favour him of likelihood for his making of his book of *Moria* in my house. There had he caught me, lo ! save for lack of a little salt. I have not contended with Erasmus, my darling, because I found no such malicious intent with Erasmus, my darling, as I find with Tindall. For had I found with Erasmus, my darling, the shrewd intent and purpose that I find in Tindall, Erasmus should no longer be any darling of mine. But I find in Erasmus, my darling, that he detesteth and abhorreth the errors and heresies of Tindall, and therefore Erasmus, my darling, shall be my darling still. And

surely had Tindall never taught these errors, or had the grace to revoke them, then should Tindall be my darling too. But while he holdeth such heretical style, I cannot take for my darling him that the devil taketh for his darling.

“As touching *Moria*, in which Erasmus, under the Greek name of *Moria* (Folly), doth merely touch and reprove such faults and follies as he found in any kind of people running through every state and condition, spiritual and temporal, leaving almost none untouched; by which book, Tindall saith, if it were in English, every man would then well see that I was then far otherwise minded than when I now write. If this be true, then the more cause have I to thank God for my amendment. But surely this is true. For God be thanked, I never had that mind in my life to have the blessed saints' images or their holy relics out of reverence. But if there were any such thing in *Moria*, it could not make any man see that I was of that mind, the book being made by another man, though he were my darling never so dear. Howbeit, that book of *Moria* doth but jest upon the abuses of such things, after the manner of the *disour's* [clown's] part in a play; nor yet so far either as the Messenger doth in my Dialogue, which yet I have suffered to stand there, and that rather by the counsel of other men, than of myself. For, albeit, it be lawful for any man to mislike the misuse of every good thing, and that in my dialogue there be not only those evil things rehearsed and answered, and the goodness of the thing plainly proved, yet hath Tindall by erroneous books so envenomed the hearts of lewdly disposed persons, that men can scarcely speak of these things now-a-days, so much as in play, but that such evil hearers wax a great deal the worse . . . Therefore, in these days, in which men, by their own default, misconstrue and take as harm the very Scripture of God, I would not now translate *Moria* into English, nor some works either

that I have myself written ere this; albeit there be no harm therein intended. But yet folks being, as they are, given to take harm of that which is good, I would not only with my own hands, help to burn my darling's book, but mine own also, rather than folks should, through their own fault, take any harm therefrom; seeing that it is likely in these days they would so do.

"But now, after this, Tindall handleth me full discourteously, for he taketh away all the thanks and reward I should have had of the spirituality. For he showeth them that I wrote not the book for any affection that I bore to them, but that I did it for the lucre that should come thereof, after which he said I so sore hunger, that, as my good friend, he prays for me that I eat not too fast for choaking.

"Now, if the Spirituality had been about to have gathered a *disme* [tenth] among them, to give it to me, Tindall here had lost it me every penny. But heaven forgive the good man, as I do. For when he speaketh of my lucre, in good faith he maketh me laugh, and so I ween he maketh many more do, who know well (God be thanked!) that I have not so much lucre thereby, that I stand in any great peril of choaking. This lies not in my breast, and is not among my peccadillos, though in searching to the bottom of my breast, I found some pretty ones there, such as I will not, however, confess to Father Tindall, because he saith confessors keep no counsel." (p. 423.)

Speaking of More and his friend Erasmus, Sir James Mackintosh observes; "It is evident that our two philosophers, who found all the fair visions they had been led to frame dispelled by noise and violence, deeply felt the injustice of citing against them, as a proof of inconsistency, that they departed from the pleasantries, the gay dreams, at most the fond speculations, of their early days, when they saw those harmless visions turned into weapons of destruction

in the blood-stained hands of the boors of Saxony, and of the ferocious fanatics of Munster. The virtuous love of peace might be more prevalent in More, the desire of personal ease predominated more in Erasmus. But both were, doubtless from commendable or excusable causes, incensed against those odious disciples, who now, 'and with no friendly voice,' invoked their authority against themselves."

With respect to Erasmus, More never cooled in his affection to the man, but he could not approve the latitude of the writer. Cresacre observes of him, that though "he could utter his mind in most eloquent phrase, yet did he always take a delight in scoffing at religious matters, and finding fault with the clergy. He took upon him to censure the fathers of the church at his pleasure, and in his writings he is said to have hatched the egg that Luther had laid. Yet is he not to be accounted heretical, for he was never obstinate in any of his opinions. He always lived a Catholic priest, and wrote sharply against the new gospellers, who then began to appear in the world. He declares, in one of his letters, that he hates these seditious opinions, with which the world is so miserably shaken. But he is justly censured by the church as a busy fellow." Finally, having found in the works of his friend many things necessary to be amended, he seriously advised him to imitate the example of the great St. Augustine, by making some atonement to the world in a Book of Retractions, to correct what he had unadvisedly written in the heat of youth. But Erasmus had not St. Augustine's humility, and he never followed this good counsel.*

On one most important point, the difference was

* Such also was the advice of the famous bishop, and Ciceronian scholar, Sudoletus: "You have composed many excellent works, but one other is required to complete the list, and that is, a book of Retractions of the freer notions of your youth. This will afford you an opportunity of explaining your sentiments in so Catholic a sense, that henceforth you set censure at defiance. This done, you may hold your peace, sit down with satisfaction, and quietly allow your adversaries to do their worst." (*Epist.* 1215.)

wide between Erasmus and his friend. This may be gathered from the following passage in a letter of his to Pace: "I had no inclination to peril my life for the truth. It is not every man that has the courage requisite to make a martyr: if put to the trial, I am afraid I should imitate St. Peter."

To this period, also, must be referred More's "Letter relative to John Frith's paper against the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar." This is, perhaps, one of the most touching of all Sir Thomas's compositions. (See *Selections*.) Frith was a young man, who had formerly placed himself under More's care, but afterwards became a zealous advocate of the new opinions. This touching remonstrance of his affectionate master was unavailing; Frith persevered in his errors, and perished in the flames of Smithfield, which were lighted by Henry alike against the Catholic and the Protestant.*

Among the many annoyances to which poor authors are subject, not the least is that of being solicited by the brethren of the craft, to read over their blotted manuscripts, to counsel, revise, and retouch. More was attacked by one of the tribe, but he contrived to escape with admirable address. Cresacre tells the anecdote with all his wonted naïveté. "A certain friend of More's had taken great pains to write a book, which he would have set out, thinking well of his own wit, though he could find no other to praise it. And wishing Sir Thomas to oversee it before it was printed, he brought it to him to view. More perusing it, and finding no matter therein worth the print, said to him with a grave countenance: 'If it had been in verse, it would be of more worth.' 'Away went

* *Quæ tua religio, paries jure necare
Igne Lutheranos, Catholicosque cruce?*

Henry Holland (1540.)

What faith is that, whose rancorous hate will strike
Both Catholic and Lutheran alike?

W.

the man, and turned it into verse, and again brought it to Sir Thomas. He looked over it, and said to the man in his odd way: 'Yea, marry, my friend, now it is somewhat, for now it is rhyme: before it was neither rhyme nor reason.'"^{*}

1533. We must now glance for an instant at the position of things in that court, from the infection of which More had providentially escaped. Five years had now rolled away since Henry first solicited a divorce, and three since he had begun to cohabit with Anne Boleyn; yet still he appeared to have made but little progress towards the attainment of his object. He had, however, learned the bitter truth, that "The way of the adulterer is hedged with thorns." (*Hosea* vi. 6.)

A priest of the name of Cranmer, had long been attached to the family of the Earl of Wiltshire, the father of Anne Boleyn. It was he who first suggested the idea of consulting the universities of Europe on the king's divorce, and on learning which, Henry, delighted at the novelty of the thing, had exclaimed: "That man has got the right sow by the ear!"[†] Anne had long known the man in her father's family, and with that address of which she was mistress, had penetrated fully into his character,

^{*} The anecdote is thus versified in an anonymous volume of the date of 1606, called the *Mouse-Trap*.

Paulus a pamphlet doth in prose present
Unto the knight, the fruit of idle time;
The critic said he should be more content
To see the thing converted into rhyme:
More said, when done, and duly brought in season;
"Now it is rhyme: before, it was nor rhyme nor reason."

[†] Nor was this the only sow that Cranmer got by the ear: the world is indebted to him for the glory, such as it is, of having discovered the astounding fact, that the sovereign pontiff is the Anti-Christ of the Apocalypse! and so pleased was he with the notion, that he made it the theme of several edifying discourses. Many a hungry parson has to thank Cranmer for this bright invention, for it has been the means by which store of fat benefices have been obtained. When the idea was first started, it filled the pious Catholic with horror: it is now hooted at from one end of Christendom to the other, and might subject the serious asserter to the penalty of a strait waistcoat

and calculated to what purpose she could turn the natural pliability of his temper. His services in the cause of the divorce were secured and amply remunerated; but a still higher meed of his devotedness awaited him. On the death of the good Warham, Henry raised him to the highest ecclesiastical honour in the kingdom, sure to find in him an Archbishop of Canterbury according to his own heart; "a station," remarks Sir J. Mackintosh, "which was, in fact, the unsuitable reward of diplomatic activity for a very ambiguous purpose."

The following items in "The State Papers" will enable us to trace correctly the remaining steps of the divorce. On the 30th of March, Cranmer was consecrated to the See of Canterbury. With one hand he received the papal bulls, by virtue of which he was invested with the pall, and with the other he surrendered them to the crown, declaring that he did not recognise the pontiff as the giver of the ecclesiastical dignity he was in the act of receiving from his hands: at one and the same moment, taking the oath of canonical obedience to the pope, and protesting that he did not believe in the assertions it contained.* Exactly twelve days after this chivalrous transaction, [April 11th], we find a letter from Cranmer to the king, and the answer of Henry to the same. They represent one of many solemn and hypocritical farces that were enacted between the king and his pliant archbishop: for they had acquired a wonderful facility of playing into each other's hands. Cranmer begs that, "for as much as it hath pleased Almighty God and the king's grace to call him, albeit a poor wretch and most unworthy, to the high office of Primate, that he would grant him his

* "Upon the moral character of this transaction it is unnecessary to dwell. If such a protest be invested with any validity, oaths cease to bind, and truth and sincerity in the affairs of life are empty sounds." (*British Statesmen*. p. 137.) And yet a long and laboured defence of this immorality has been recently published by an eminent divine of the Church of England.

royal licence to proceed in the affair of the divorce, and bring it at once to an issue, and that for the exoneration of his own conscience, and the performance of his duty to his country; for, he adds, the deciding upon the divorce would dispel "the obloquy and bruit, which daily spring up and increase, of the clergy of the realm, and put out of doubt all such inconveniences, perils, and dangers, as the rude and ignorant people do speak, and talk to be imminent.'"

April 14. Is the king's answer to Cranmer. He is sorry to see the "the uncertainty of our succession, whereby our said people is seen to be not a little offended;" he wishes him by reason of his office of primacy, to set some direction and end in the said great cause of matrimony, according to the pleasure of Almighty God, inasmuch as it hath so long remained undetermined, to our great and grievous unquietness and burthen of conscience."

May 12. A letter from Cranmer to Henry. A monition has been served on Queen Catharine, and, from her refusal to receive it, she is pronounced *truly and manifestly contumacious*.

May 17. Cranmer is at Dunstable, the residence of Queen Catharine, and writes to the king, to advertise his highness, that his grace's great matter is now brought to a final sentence, to be given upon Friday next ensuing; "at which time, I trust so to endeavor myself further in this behalf, as shall become me to do; to the pleasure of Almighty God, and the mere truth of the matter."

May 23. Cranmer again to Henry, "advertising his highness, that this 23d day of May, he has given sentence in his grace's great and weighty cause." What he adds shows that no time had been lost; "by the letter by Mr. Thurlesby [whom Henry made bishop of Westminster five years after, the only bishop of that see,] I was advertised of your gracious pleasure that I should cause your gracious council to conceive a procuratory concerning a se-

cond matrimony; I have sent the said letters to them, and required them to do according to the tenor thereof, most humbly beseeching your highness that I may know your grace's further pleasure concerning the same matrimony, as soon as your grace, with your council, shall be perfectly resolved therein. For the time of the coronation is so near at hand, that the matter requireth good expedition."

July 3, 4. Letters of Lord Mountjoy to the council, containing the report of the conference with Queen Catharine, at her residence at Amptill. We shall have occasion to quote these letters more at large.

September 7. A letter of Anne Boleyn to Lord Cobham, announcing the birth, on that day, of the princess Elizabeth.

October 10. Letter of Lord Mountjoy to Crumwell. Many of Catharine's household refuse to call her otherwise than Queen. He is tired of being her chamberlain, and wishes to resign.

December 19. Letters of the Duke of Suffolk and of the council to the king, containing a report of their conference with Catharine, who, we find, has removed to Bugden.

May 21, 1534. Letter of Archbishop Lee and Bishop Tunstall to the king. As the lay members of the council had been unsuccessful in persuading Catharine to acquiesce in the divorce, it was resolved to try what effect the clergy could produce, and the present is the report of their conference. All will not do: Catharine is still determined to be queen in spite of them, and will not concede one jot of her privilege.

September 14. Letter of Clerke, Bishop of Wells, to Crumwell, reporting a preacher, who had *accidentally* prayed for Queen Catharine, instead of Queen Anne. This unconscious partizan of the queen, who does his duty by the mere force of habit, we find to be Dr. Carsley, Canon of Wells Cathedral, who is made to express his deep contrition for an

offence, which his bishop thinks grave enough to be reported to the council!

Speaking of the divorce and the subsequent marriage, Cresacre remarks, that this farce "was the beginning of a lamentable tragedy, the end whereof we cannot yet see, though there have been almost one hundred years since." Better than three hundred years have now elapsed, and yet, humanly speaking, is there any better prospect of the *denouement* of this great drama?

On the 25th of January, Henry was privately married to Anne, and her coronation took place on the 1st of June. The pageant, for obvious reasons, was more splendid and imposing than any thing of the kind ever witnessed before. Aware of the weight of More's opinion, the king tried every possible means to obtain, at least, the appearance of his approbation of the proceedings. With this view he commanded the bishops of Durham, Bath, and Winchester, to desire his attendance at the coronation. They were ordered to write a letter to persuade him to join the procession, and to accompany it with the needful present of £20 to buy a court dress. More, in his usual odd manner, excused himself from attending, but said the £20 might as well stay where it was. "But," added he, in a solemn tone, "take heed, my lords, take heed lest by procuring your lordships to be present at the coronation, they will next ask you to preach for the setting forth of the same; and finally, to write books to all the world, in its defence." Speaking of Anne Boleyn and her coronation, More observed to his family: "How often, when we think we are soaring the highest, will fate come and pluck us out of our feathers, and suddenly down we come to the earth again!" When some told him of the festive doings on this occasion, he replied in the old saw,—“They dance well for whom fortune pays the piper;” but let them take heed that “the end of the feast, be not the begin-

ning of a fray." More felt that to attend the coronation of this second-hand queen, would be to turn his back on his old mistress, and insult her in the hour of her distress. To use the phrase of a statesman of a following reign, he was not "One of those glow-worms that shine in the summer of their friends' good fortune, but crawl away in the adverse storm." (*Lord Burleigh*)

More had a keen eye to the issues of things. When Roper had some time before informed him of the king's marriage, he mused for a while, with his finger to his forehead, and then observed: "Roper, my son, they'll not let this matter rest here; I pray to God that it be not confirmed with oaths, and enforced with much severity!" That More was no false prophet, the events of a few short months will show.* It is conjectured that More's unreserve in uttering his sentiments, and his intrepidity in refusing compliances hostile to his feelings and his conscience, were carried to the ear of Anne Boleyn, and that she was an active agent in exciting Henry's future rigour against his old and faithful servant. It might have been imagined that she had exhausted all her spite upon the unfortunate Wolsey, but,

"The depth of woman's malice who can tell?"

We must be allowed to direct the reader's attention for a moment to the much-injured Catharine, and to the repeated attempts made to intimidate her into an abjuration of her rights and dignities. On the 3d of July, as we have already seen, the Lord Mountjoy and others repaired to her residence at Ampthill, to state to her the king's determination.

- * There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the nature of the times deceas'd;
The which observ'd, a man may prophecy,
With a near aim, of the main chance of things
As yet to come to life; which in their seeds,
And weak beginnings lie entreasur'd.

Shakespeare.

They found her indisposed with a cough and lying upon a pallet. When told the title she was henceforward to bear, she said "that she was not Princess Dowager, but the Queen, and the king's true wife; that she came to the king a pure maiden, and thereupon was crowned and anointed queen, and had by the king lawful issue and *no bastard*,* wherefore the name of queen she would vindicate, challenge, and so call herself during her life. 'That it stood neither with the law of God, nor man, nor with the king's honour, to have two queens."

"When we alleged to her, that, if she reserved the name of queen, it was thought she would do it for a vain desire and appetite of glory, whereby she would provoke the king's highness, not only against her, but also against her whole family and servants, and furthermore be an occasion that the king would withdraw his fatherly love from her honourable and dearest daughter, the Lady Princess, by reason of her unkindness, and that this should move if no other cause did. To this her answer was: As for any vain glory, it was not that she desired the name of a queen, but only for discharge of her conscience, to declare herself the king's very true wife; as to the Princess, her daughter, she said that she was the king's true begotten child, and as God had given her to them, so, for her part, she would render her again to the king, as his daughter, to do with her as shall stand with his pleasure; trusting to God, that she will prove an honest woman. In fine, that neither for her daughter, family, possession, or any worldly adversity, or displeasure, that might ensue, would she yield in this cause, to put her soul in danger; alleging the words of the Gospel, that they were not to be feared who have the power over the body, but He only, that hath power over the soul."

* It is clear from the significant tone in which this was uttered, that Catharine knew of the actual situation of the woman for whose impure embraces her husband had deserted her.

On the day following they repaired to her again, to read over their report of what had passed the day previous. When they came to the words Princess Dowager, she asked for the papers, "and calling for pen and ink, in such places as she found the name of Princess Dowager, she with her pen struck it out, as it is apparent."* When the paper, thus amended by her hand, was read through, she said: "That she did not vindicate the name of queen for mere appetite of vain glory; she protested that she rather would be a poor beggar's wife, and be sure of Heaven, than to be queen of all the world, and in doubt thereof, by occasion of her own consent. As to her being but the king's subject, to that she said, as long as the king took her for his wife, she was also his subject: but if the king took her not for his wife, she said that she came not into this realm on merchandize, nor to be married to any merchant. She added, that she had always demeaned herself well and truly towards the king, and if it can be proved that, in word or deed, she had done any thing prejudicial to his grace or his realm, she is content to suffer for it."

Two months after, another attempt is made to subdue the queen's firmness, but with as little success as before. The agents employed are the Dukes of Sussex, Suffolk, and others; they represent her as "persisting in her great stomach and obstinacy," and protesting with a loud voice that she would rather be hewn in pieces than forswear her lawful title of queen. As Catharine's old attendants had refused to recognise their royal mistress by any but her former title, the commission had come with a fresh set of servants to replace them. But Catharine's firmness so alarmed the new comers, that "when they came to take their new oath, they said they were loth to serve her, persisting in the mind she was of." When the commissioners spoke of

* The obliteration still remains in the authentic document in the State Paper Office.

removing her to Somersham, she said "that they would not get her to go there, unless they should bind her with ropes."

Considering the impetuosity of Henry's character, and the arts of the wanton by his side, ever prompt to excite to mischief, we are almost disposed to wonder how the intrepidity of Catharine escaped unpunished. Could the slightest surmise, the veriest breath of slander have attached to her, how eagerly, at a moment like this, would it have been turned to her destruction!

Lee and Tunstall, in their interview with the queen, display neither great delicacy, nor much address. They begin by telling her that the king, her former husband, after being discharged of the marriage made with her, had contracted a new one with his dearest wife, queen Anne; that, God be thanked, fair issue is already sprung of this marriage, *and more likely to follow.** The effect was what might have been expected from a woman of Catharine's keen feelings and lofty spirit. She is described as being "in great and choler and agony, always interrupting our words." When they asserted that the consummation of her marriage with Henry's brother had been proved, with a loud voice she said they lied falsely, that so said. She answered, that she was not bound to stand to the divorce made by my lord of Canterbury, whom she called a mere shadow: that though he had given sentence against her, yet the Pope had given sentence with her, whom she took for Christ's vicar, and therefore would always obey as a faithful daughter; that she would never leave the name of queen, and would always take herself for your highness' wife; in a word, that she would in no wise, either for any peril, or loss of her life or goods, relinquish the name of queen. (p. 419.)

* Do not these over officious gentlemen, in the present instance, illustrate the old proverb, "of counting the chickens before the eggs are hatched?"

It is painful to see that these two visitors, reverend churchmen as they were, did not scruple to stoop to a falsehood, in order to subserve the purposes of their royal master. They told Catharine that "*after* his highness was discharged of the marriage made with her, he contracted a new marriage with his dearest wife, queen Anne." The divorce, mere form as it was, was pronounced by Cranmer on the 28th of May, and Henry had been privately married by Dr. Lee, in a garret at Whitehall, on the 25th of the January preceding. When the questions were naturally asked—"How the king could have proceeded to a new marriage, before the former had been lawfully annulled?" and "How the right of succession could be less doubtful now than before?" Henry gravely declared, that "he had examined the cause in the court of his own conscience, which was enlightened and directed by the spirit God, who guideth the hearts of princes."

It may reasonably be questioned, whether all history can afford an example so fraught with artifice, self-delusion, and studied hypocrisy, as the affair of the divorce of Henry the Eighth; and yet a learned living divine of the established church has told the world, that this divorce "was the very cradle of the reformation in England."

More's opinions, and the firmness with which he had recently resisted the royal will, were now the subjects of common discourse, and every dependent on the court, every time-serving courtier, was arrayed in a kind of natural hostility against the ex-chancellor. The most malignant scrutiny was exercised to discover some ground of accusation against him. Among others, recourse was had to the following. After Henry's divorce had been publicly proclaimed, a document was set forth by authority, stating the reasons for the measure. A report was circulated that Sir Thomas had written an answer to it. The accusation was a grave one,

coming at such a moment, and he felt called upon to clear himself of the charge. This was the subject of the following letter to Secretary Crumwell.

Right Worshipful Sir:—In most hearty wise I recommend myself to you. My cousin, William Rastell, has informed me, that your goodness showed him, that it has been reported I have made answer against a book of certain articles, lately put forth in print by the king's honourable council, and delivered it to my said cousin to print. And though he, for his part, truly denied it, yet because he somewhat remained in doubt whether your Master-ship gave him therein full credence or not, he has desired me, for his farther discharge, to declare to you the very truth. Sir, so help me God, neither my said cousin, nor any man else, ever had any book of mine to print, since the said book of the king's council came forth. For, in truth, the last book he printed of mine was that which I made against an unknown heretic, who has sent over a work, that walketh through many men's hands, named *The Supper of The Lord*, against the blessed Sacrament of the Altar. My answer to which, although the printer (unawares to me) dated it 1534, by which it seems to be printed since the feast of the Circumcision, was, of very truth, both made and printed, and many of them gone, before Christmas. I never espied the printer's oversight in the date, till more than three weeks after; the which being true, sufficeth for his declaration in this belief. As touching my own self, I shall say thus much farther, that, on my faith, I never made any such book, nor ever thought to do so. I read the said Book of certain articles once over and never more. But I am for one's reading many times, things whereof I would have metely sure knowledge, ere ever I would make an answer, though the matter and the book both concerned the poorest man in the

town, and were of the simplest man's making too. For of many things which in that Book are touched, in some I know not the law, and in some I know not the fact; and, therefore, would I never be so childish, nor so play the proud arrogant fool, by whomsoever the book had been made, and to whomsoever the matter had belonged, as to presume to make an answer to the same, concerning matters whereof I was never sufficiently learned in the law, nor fully instructed in the fact. But when the matter appertained to the King's Highness, and the Book professeth openly that it was made by his honourable council, and by them put in print with his Grace's license, I surely trust, in good faith, that of your good mind towards me, though I had never written you word thereof, yourself will both think and say so much for me, that it were a thing far unlikely, that an answer should be made thereto by me. I will, by the grace of Almighty God, as long as it shall please him to lend me life in this world, in all such places as I am of my duty to God and the King's Grace bounden, truly say my mind, and discharge my conscience, as becometh a poor honest true man, wheresoever I shall be by his Grace commanded. Yet surely if it should happen that any Book should issue abroad in the name of His Grace, or of his honourable council, if it seemed such as myself would not have given my own advice to the making, yet I know my bounden duty, to bear more honour to my Prince, and more reverence to his honourable council, than it could become me, for many causes, to make an answer to the same, or to counsel and advise any man else to do it. And, therefore, as it is a thing I never did, nor intended, so I heartily beseech you, if you shall happen to perceive any man, either of ill-will, or of lightness, report any such thing of me, be so good a master to me as help to bring us both together; and then, never take me for honest after, if you do not find his

honesty somewhat impaired in the matter. Thus, I am bold on your goodness to encumber you with my long rude letter; in the contents whereof, I eft-soons heartily beseech you to be, in the manner aforesaid, a good master and friend to me; whereby you shall bind me to be your beadsman while I live! as knoweth our Lord, whose especial grace, both bodily and ghostly, long preserve and keep you. At Chelsea, on the Vigil of the Purification of our Blessed Lady, [Feb. 1, 1533,] by the hand of assuredly all your own

THOMAS MORE.

We have seen numerous instances of More's faithful prognostications of the future in relation to others; we are now to witness his forebodings of his own fate, and that of his family. In the position he now stood, it needed no prophet's eye to foresee the storm that was gathering in the horizon, and which was shortly to burst over his head. He knew the cruel and impetuous temper of the king, from which his most faithful servants found no security. He was well aware that if he could not be won over to Henry's purpose by gentle means, he must prepare for the worst; and he awaited the impending blow in silent resignation. There was nothing in More of that reckless and fool-hardy spirit that leads a man to brave his fate. As a father, he was far from being indifferent to the future lot of his wife and children; on the contrary, the blow that would reach them through his person, caused him to pass many a restless night; and he prayed with earnestness for courage to support the blow; "for," he observed. "with all my philosophy, I find that my flesh cannot endure a fillip." Hear how he expresses himself on this subject, in a letter which he subsequently wrote to Margaret: "And notwithstanding also I have good hope that God shall never suffer so good and wise a prince, in such way to requite the long service of his

true faithful servant; yet, since there is nothing impossible to fall, I forget not in this matter the counsel of Christ in the Gospel, that ere I should begin to build this castle for the safeguard of mine own soul, I should sit and reckon what the charge should be. I counted, Margaret, full surely many a restless night, while my wife slept, and weighed ere I slept, what peril might befall me: so far forth, that I am sure there came no care above mine. And in devising thereupon, daughter, I had a full heavy heart. But yet, I thank our Lord, that, for all that, I never thought to change, though the very uttermost should happen to me that my fears ran upon.

He thought it wise to prepare his family for the worst, and, in his own characteristic manner, once hired a pursuivant to come on a sudden to his house, while he was at dinner, and knocking hastily at the door, to summon him the next day before the Council. Such was his whimsical method of schooling his wife and children, the better to meet the calamities which he felt were approaching. "He would talk to them," says Roper, "of the joys of Heaven and of the pains of hell; of the lives of holy martyrs, of their grievous pains endured for the love of God, and of their passion and death undergone rather than offend him. And he would add, what a happy and blessed thing it was to suffer privation of goods, imprisonment, loss of lands, and even of life itself in the cause of Heaven! With this and the like virtuous talk, he had so long before his trouble encouraged them, that when he afterwards fell into trouble indeed, it was felt by them a great deal the less."

The close of this year witnessed a memorable decision. A convocation of the clergy had been held at Canterbury and York: in the former it was resolved, that the Bishop of Rome "had received from Heaven no higher jurisdiction than any other

foreign bishop,"—four voices only opposing it, and one doubting; while the convocation of York unanimously came to the same decision. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge followed the example of the metropolitan courts; and Cranmer, laying aside his style of legate of the Apostolic See, assumed that of metropolitan. Injunctions were issued that the very word "Pope" should be carefully erased out of all books employed in the public worship, and the prayer in his behalf abolished. All persons were commanded to speak of him only as the Bishop of Rome; while the chapters and collegiate bodies renounced his jurisdiction under their common seal, and acknowledged the king's unqualified supremacy.

Henry now saw himself at the height of his utmost ambition, supreme not only in temporal, but in spiritual power.* The salutary influence which the presence of a Wolsey and a More, exerted upon the violence of his nature, had been removed; and his will and his passions were catered to by those abject tools of power,—a Crumwell and a Cranmer. The possession of unlimited sway, spiritual and temporal, acted fatally upon a heart naturally selfish, and which had never known the wholesome discipline of misfortune. As Henry advanced in years, these united causes produced "that portentous combination of sensuality and intolerance, from which the mind painfully and instinctively recoils."† (*Tytler.*) Im-

* A bold sarcastic reply was made to the King, by the Lord Dacre, who, when asked by Henry what he thought of the new ecclesiastical authority he had assumed, replied: "If Your Majesty has already sinned, and if you should sin hereafter, you have now only to absolve yourself!"

† Through tyranny, the virtues of the hearts
Suffer an ostracism, and depart.—DR. DOWNE. (1500)

When these so noble benefits shall prove
Not well dispos'd, the mind growing once corrupt,
They turn to vicious forms, ten times more ugly
Than ever they were fair. This man, so complete,
Hath into monstrous habits put the graces
That once were his, and is become as black
As if besmear'd in hell.

Henry VIII.

pressed with this truth, what are we to say to the following cool reflection in the pages of the historian of the Reformation: "If we consider the great things that were done by him [Henry], we must acknowledge that there was a signal providence of God, in raising up a king of his temper, for clearing the way to that blessed work that followed; and which could hardly have been done but by a man of his humour!" (Burnet, *Preface*.) He afterwards terms Henry "the postilion of the Reformation, lashing his horses through thick and thin."

From the establishment of the king's supremacy, the attention of parliament was directed to the succession to the crown; and, by another act, the marriage between Henry and Catharine was pronounced unlawful and null, and that between him and Anne Boleyn lawful and valid: the king's issue by the first marriage was, of course, excluded from the succession, that by the second was made inheritable of the crown; to slander the said marriage, or seek to prejudice the succession of the heirs thereof, was declared *high treason*, if the offence was committed by writing, printing, or deed; and *misprision* of treason, if by words only: and all the king's subjects of full age, were commanded to swear obedience to the same act, under the penalty of misprision of treason.

Now was the moment to try men's souls; many were the conflicts between fear and duty, and not one of them but was watched with a jealous eye. The various discussions on so delicate a subject kept the

The germ of Shakspeare's thought may be found in the following lines of old Plautus:

Maxima pars morem hunc homines habent :—
Quod sibi volunt, dum id impetrant, boni sunt ;
Sed id ubi jam penes sese habent,
Ex bonis pessimi et fraudulentissimi fiunt.

The greater part of men are thus by nature :—
While aiming at their purpose, all is well ;
But this their end attain'd, they change at once,
And from good men become mere knaves and ruffians.

W.

king's mind tremblingly alive to every rumour; his jealousy magnified the least hint of disapprobation into a crime, which nothing but blood could atone. The first who suffered, were implicated in a conspiracy attributed to Elizabeth Barton, known by the name of the Holy Maid of Kent. She was a native of Aldington, in that county, and being subject to fits, the contortions of her body, and the incoherent expressions which she uttered during her paroxysms,* were attributed by the ignorance of her neighbours to preternatural agency. She insensibly partook of the delusion, and, at the recommendation of the parish rector, professed herself a nun in the priory of St. Sepulchre, Canterbury. Here her ecstasies and supposed revelations were multiplied; and the fame of her sanctity spread widely and deluded many. To use the words of Sir J. Mackintosh, "her morbid susceptibility was so excited by Henry's profane defiance of the Catholic church, and by his cruel desertion of Catharine, his faithful wife, that her pious and humane feelings led her to represent, and probably to believe, herself to be visited by a divine revelation of those punishments which the king was about to draw down on himself and on the kingdom. In the universal opinion of the sixteenth century, such interpositions were considered as still occurring." She was apprehended, with several others accused of being her accomplices, and condemned to stand in the pillory at St. Paul's Cross, on a Sunday, and confess the imposture. The more humane had hoped that Henry would have been content with this public avowal of her guilt; but he would not be satisfied without the blood of the poor girl, "whose visions" observes the humane Mackintosh, "were those of a disturbed, if not alienated mind."

Bishop Fisher was attainted by the same act, for

* Turner terms them "her vocal effusions :—" would not this phrase lead us to conjecture that the poor girl's ravings were given in recitative?

having innocently listened to some of the nun's revelations, and was committed to the Tower. The infirmities of age were upon him, for he was now past his eightieth year. In his letter to the lords, on occasion of their passing the bill, he pleaded disease and weakness, as the cause of not appearing in his place, adding: "if I had been present in person, I doubt not my manifold infirmities would have moved you much more to pity the cause whereby I am brought into this grievous trouble." We are told by Roper, that More's name was originally inserted in the attainder, the king supposing that this bill would be so troublous and terrible to Sir Thomas More, that it would force him to relent and condescend to his request; wherein his grace was much deceived. Sir Thomas was personally to be received in his own defence to make answer. But the king, not liking that, sent the Archbishop of Canterbury, the chancellor, the Duke of Norfolk, and Crumwell, to attempt his conversion. Audley reminded More of the king's especial favour, and of his many benefits. More admitted them, but modestly added, that his highness had most graciously declared that, on this matter, he should not be again molested. When in the end they saw that no persuasion could move him, they then said, "that the king's highness had given them in commandment, if they could by no gentleness win him, in the king's name with ingratitude to charge him, that never was servant to his master so villainous, nor subject to his prince so traitorous as he." They even reproached him for having either written in the name of his master, or betrayed his sovereign into writing, the book against Luther, which had so deeply pledged Henry to the support of papal pretensions. To these upbraidings he calmly answered: "These terrors are arguments for children, and not for me. As to the fact, the king knoweth, that after the book was finished by his highness's appointment, I was, by the

consent of the maker, only a sorter out and placer of the principal matters therein contained." He added, that he warned the king of the prudence of "touching the pope's authority more slenderly, and that he had reminded Henry of the statutes of *præmunire*," whereby "a good part of the pope's pastoral care was pared away;" to which the impetuous monarch answered, "We are so much bounden unto the see of Rome, that we cannot do too much honour unto it."

On More's return to Chelsea from his interview with these lords, Roper said to him—"I hope all is well, since you are so merry?"—"It is so, indeed," said More, "I thank God!"—"Are you, then, out of the parliament bill?" said Roper.—"By my troth, I never remembered it; but," said More, "I will tell thee why I was so merry; because I had given the devil a foul fall, and that with those lords I had gone so far as, without great shame, I never can go back again." "A frank avowal of the power of temptation, and a simple joy at having, at the hazard of life, escaped from the farther seductions of the court, bestow a greatness on these few and familiar words, which scarcely belongs to any other of the sayings of man." (*Mackintosh*.)

Henry, incensed at the failure of wheedling and threatening messages, broke out into violent declarations of his resolution to include More in the attainder, and said that he would be personally present to ensure the passing of the bill. Lord Audley and his colleagues on their knees besought their master to forbear, lest by an overthrow in his own presence, he might be condemned by his own subjects, and dishonoured throughout Christendom for ever;* adding,

* *Ὁς ἀργαλίον πραγμ' ἴστιν, ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ θεοί,
Δούλον γινισθαι παραφρονούντος δισποτοῦ.*

Aristoph. *Plut.* i.

O Jove and all ye gods, how hard a thing
To serve a wicked and a senseless king!

W.

that they doubted not that they should find a more meet occasion "to serve his turn;" for that in this case of the nun he was so clearly innocent, that men deemed him far worthier of praise than of reproof. Henry was compelled to yield.* "Such," says Mackintosh, "was the power of defenceless virtue over the slender remains of independence among slavish peers, and over the lingering remnants of common humanity which might still be mingled with a cooler policy in the bosoms of subservient politicians." One of the worst of that race, Thomas Cromwell, on meeting Roper in the parliament house next day after the king assented to the prayer of his ministers, bade him tell More that he was put out of the bill. Roper sent a messenger to Margaret Roper, who hastened to her beloved father with the tidings. More answered her with his usual gaiety and fondness, "In faith, Megg, what is put off is not given up."† Soon after the Duke of Norfolk said to him—"By the mass! Master More, it is perilous striving with princes; the anger of a prince brings death."—"Is that all, my lord? then the difference between you and me is but this—that *I shall die to-day and you to-morrow.*" "No life in Plutarch is more full of happy sayings and striking retorts than that of More. But the terseness and liveliness of his are justly overlooked in the contemplation of that union of perfect simplicity with moral grandeur, which, perhaps, no other human being has so uniformly reached."—*Sir J. Mackintosh.*

In Bishop Godwyn's Annals (1616) is a portrait of Henry VIII., with this epigraph: *Regem dedit iratus eis*—I gave them a king in my anger.

* The House of Lords addressed the king, praying him to declare whether it would be agreeable to his pleasure, that Sir T. More and others should not be heard in their own defence before "the lords in the royal senate called the *Sters Chamber.*" Nothing more appears on the journals relative to this matter. *Lords' Journ.* 6th March, 1533. The journals prove the narrative of Roper, from which the text is composed, to be as accurate as it is beautiful.

† He spoke to her in his conversational Latin—"Quod differtur non aufertur."

The reader will be gratified by listening to More's simple and honest statement of the singular affair of the nun. Not content with clearing his conduct in a letter to Crumwell, he also addressed another to the king, pleading very feelingly his past services in his favour.*

But though Sir Thomas had satisfactorily cleared his conduct in reference to the nun, other troubles were in store for him. He, as well as his fellow-sufferer, the virtuous Fisher, might have said, in the language of Shakspeare :

If I'm traduced by tongues, which neither know
My faculties, nor person, yet will be
The chroniclers of my doings, let me say :
" 'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake
That virtue must go through." *Henry VIII.*

The authority of Fisher and More had great weight not only in England, but also on the continent, and the warmest opponents of the divorce were accustomed to boast, that they had no fear of going wrong so long as they followed the opinions of these two celebrated men. The moment was now come to try the experiment whether the danger to which they had been exposed had subdued their spirit. Fisher, as we have already seen, was in the Tower, and, although an infirm old man, was treated in the first instance with extreme rigour, and afterwards with brutal neglect. When the good old man, now in nearly his eightieth year, was visited by some bishops who were his friends, and earnestly reasoned with upon the subject, he said that he had no disposition to appear singular, and would make every concession which his conscience would allow. He declared himself ready to swear to the Succession, and prepared never to dispute about the marriage with Catharine ; but that he could never declare his conviction that it was not against the law of God. This,

* For these Letters see APPENDIX, Nos. 3 and 4.

however, would not satisfy the king; he was attainted in Parliament, deprived of his bishopric, and recommitted to the Tower. The cruel neglect which the venerable prelate experienced, and the manner in which Henry treated the victims of his resentment, may be seen from the following pathetic passage in a letter which he addressed to Crumwell:—Furthermore, I beseech you, be good master to me in my necessity; for I have neither shirt, nor suit, nor any other clothes that are necessary for me to wear, but that be ragged and rent too shamefully; notwithstanding, I might easily suffer that, if they would keep my body warm. And my diet, also, God knoweth how slender it is at many times. And, now, in mine age, my stomach may not away but with a few kinds of meats; which, if I want, I decay forthwith, and fall into crazes and diseases of my body, and cannot keep myself in health. And also I beseech you, that it may please you, by your high wisdom, to move the King's Highness to take me into his gracious favour again, and to restore me to my liberty out of this cold and painful imprisonment, whereby ye shall bind me to be your poor beadsman for ever unto Almighty God, who ever have you in his protection and custody.

Other twain things I must desire from you. The one is, that it may please you I may take some priest with me into the Tower, to hear my confession against this holy time; the other is, that I may borrow some books to say my devotions more effectually these holy days, for the comfort of my soul. This I beseech you to grant me of your charity. And thus our Lord God send you a merry Christmas, and so comfortable to your heart's desire. At the Tower, the 22d of December, by your poor beadsman*

ROCHESTER.

* *Beadsman*—One who prays for another.

Yes, in my depth of love, I'll be
One that will drop his beads for thee.

Herrick (1636).

That this very touching letter had any effect in mitigating the rigour of his imprisonment, we have no proof. He continued a year after in the Tower; and it appeared probable, considering his advanced age, and the treatment he received, that death would in a little time put a period to his sufferings, when a well-meant, but unseasonable honour paid him by Pope Paul III., in creating him a Cardinal, roused the half sleeping lion, and drew down his destructive fury upon the head of the devoted bishop. No sooner had the intelligence of this promotion reached the King, than he gave the strictest orders that the bearer of these honours should be prohibited from entering his dominions, and immediately despatched Secretary Crumwell to the Tower to examine the poor old man, who, amidst the squalid wretchedness and privations of his prison-house, was wholly unconscious of the honours intended him. After some introductory conversation, Crumwell said to him, "My Lord of Rochester, what would you say if the Pope should send you a Cardinal's hat; would you accept it?"—"Sir," replied the bishop, "I know myself to be so far unworthy of any such dignity, that I think of nothing less. But, if any such thing should happen, assure yourself I should improve that favour to the best advantage I could, in assisting the Holy Catholic Church of Christ; and, in that respect, I would receive it upon my knees." This was all the inquisitor wanted, and, like a very zealous and faithful messenger, he hastened to report it to the King, the words of the reply, in all probability, losing nothing by the way. Henry could not restrain his passion; but as he had grown very large and unwieldy, words could not at once find utterance. After an effort, he exclaimed: "Ah ha! and so the old man is yet so lusty? Well, let the Pope make him a Cardinal when he will. Mother of

God! Paul may send him the hat, but I will take care that he shall have never a head to wear it on.”*

In a despatch to the King, dated June 12, is the following. “Finally, the said Machon writeth that he, expostulating with the Bishop of Rome for that he had made the Bishop of Rochester a Cardinal, knowing him to be a person whom your Grace favoured not, and who had most worthily deserved your Grace’s high indignation, the said Bishop of Rome answered, that he had not done it for any displeasure unto your Highness, but only for that he thought him, for his singular learning and good living, to be a person most meet to be present in the General Council, there to give his aid and assistance in such doubts as might arise.”

From this moment, Fisher’s fate was sealed; and the same base and cruel means was employed to get him into Henry’s power, which was afterwards practised with the same success upon More himself. Rich, the solicitor-general, a man

“damned to everlasting fame.”

was sent to the unsuspecting Bishop with a message from the king. He informed him, that his majesty, for the better satisfaction of his own conscience, had sent him, in this secret manner, to know his opinion of the Supremacy; and, in order the more to encourage him to make a disclosure of

* “With this scurvy jest, and with such brutal defiance, did Henry begin his new career of sanguinary tyranny.”—*Sir J. Mackintosh.*

Bad as was the king’s jest, it seems to have been thought a *capital* thing at the time, for the historians of this period have tried to improve it. “The Pope,” says old Hall, “did send the Cardinal’s hat as far as Calais, but the head it should have fitted, was as high as London Bridge, ere ever the hat could come.”

Hollinshead attempts a new turn:

“The hat came as far as Calais, but the head was off before the hat was on; so that they met not.”

Old Fuller phrases it thus:

“Fisher had made a monument for himself, and had a Cardinal’s hat sent for him; but neither his head came into the hat, nor his body into the monument.”

his mind, Rich added, that the king assured him, on his honour, that, whatever he should say to him, he should abide no danger or peril for it, nor should any advantage be taken of the opinions thus confidentially communicated. Trusting to this promise, and unsuspecting of any snare, Fisher inconsiderately declared—"That as to the business of the Supremacy, he must needs repeat to His Majesty, what he had often told him before, and would so tell him were he to die that very hour, that it was utterly unlawful, and that the king should beware of taking such title upon him, as he valued his own soul, and the good of his posterity." For these words, Fisher was brought to trial, found guilty on the evidence of Rich, and condemned to be beheaded. He suffered with the serenity and heroism that might be expected from his character. Being informed at five o'clock in the morning of the day of his execution, that it was his last, he received the intelligence with an unchanged countenance, and laying himself on his pallet, slept soundly for two hours. He then rose and dressed himself with unusual care, which being remarked by his attendant, who hinted that he would soon have to doff this better suit—"What of that, John," said he, "dost thou not know that this is my marriage-day, and that it becometh me, on so joyful an occasion, to go appareled in my best?" The veneration which Henry once bore to this admirable man, the personal friend of his father, of whose counsellors he was the last survivor, and the prelate to whose care his pious mother, on her death-bed, had recommended the inexperience of his youth, seems now to have been changed into brute and unrelenting hatred. Not content with the execution of the venerable prelate, he ordered the dead body to be stripped, and after being exposed for some hours to the gaze of the populace, to be thrown into the grave without coffin or shroud.*

* Erasmus thus sums up the character of Fisher—"I know of none

March 30.—This being the closing day of the parliamentary session of 1534, the chancellor Audley, when the commons were at the bar of the house of lords, but when they could neither deliberate, nor assent, read the king's letters patent, containing the form of an oath relative to the succession and other matters, and appointing the archbishop of Canterbury, the chancellor, and the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, to be commissioners for administering it. No time was lost in putting to the test the firmness of the ex-chancellor. On the 13th of April, More was summoned to appear before the commissioners at Lambeth, to take an oath to a law, which one of the ablest lawyers of our age pronounces to be a monstrous and tyrannical edict, mis-called a law.* The fatal summons found him engaged in his studies in his quiet retreat at Chelsea: but the blow did not reach him unprepared. Having, as Cresacre informs us, a presentment of what was that day to take place, he had risen at an earlier hour than usual, and repaired to Chelsea church, where he was confessed, and, at an early mass, devoutly received the blessed sacrament; as he was always accustomed to do, when any matter of importance was to be undertaken.

The reader who knows not "of what spirit those times were," will be astonished to learn, that the same pursuivants who came to apprehend the knight, were also furnished with a warrant for searching his premises, it being thought that he was not really so poor as he pretended to be. Unmoved by the indignity thus offered him, in violating his

to compare to him for integrity of life, for extent of learning, and for greatness of soul."

Storer has some beautiful verses to his memory, which terminate thus:

One patriarch-like, and grave in all designs ;
Who finish'd well his long, long pilgrimage :
A man made old to teach the worth of age !

* Sir James Mackintosh, Hist. Eng. vol. ii. p. 152.

domestic sanctuary, More lost nothing of his habitual gaiety. While the officers were upon the search, he told his daughter Margaret that those who thus doubted the truth of his poverty and were determined to ascertain the fact, would have nothing for their pains ; " unless," added he, glancing his eye roguishly towards his wife—" unless they should happen to find Alice's gay girdle, and her gold beads."

More now prepared to attend the summons, and begged his son-in-law Roper to accompany him.

It had been his custom to start at an early hour for Westminster, to attend to his official duties ; and regularly as the morning came, did his attentive wife and affectionate children accompany the fond father to the water-side, where he took his barge. On the way, he was sure to have some little piece of well-timed advice for one, and his ready jest for another ; and on leaving them for the day, he kissed them all, and waved his hand in farewell as the boat parted and he lost sight of them among the trees. On this occasion, they accompanied him as usual, but no merry jest enlivened the walk. The future was present before him, and the father's heart was full. He felt this moment of unusual weakness, and mistrusted himself. It was not for him at such a time to add to the anguish of his family. Therefore, when they came to the garden-gate that led to the bank of the Thames, he stopped, kissed them all with more than usual fondness, and begged them to return to the house and pray for him. Then, carefully closing the wicket after him, he went into the boat with Roper and four of his servants. He turned not his eyes once back towards the garden, to wave his wonted farewell ; and was spared the additional pang of beholding his favourite Margaret, who had lingered behind the rest, unable to tear herself from the spot. His countenance, says his son-in-law, bespoke a heavy heart, and for some time he sat wrapped in silent thought. It was evident that the internal con-

flict was strong: but, at last, "his mind being lightened and relieved by those high principles to which, with him, every low consideration yielded," he pressed Roper's arm, and said to him in a significant whisper—"Son Roper, I thank our Lord the field is won!" What he meant thereby, continues Roper, I knew not at the time; but being loth to appear ignorant, I answered, "Sir, I am very glad thereof." But, as I conjectured, it was the love he had to God, which wrought in him so effectually, as to conquer all his animal affections.

On appearing before the commissioners, and after having read the statute and the form of the oath, he declared his readiness to swear that he would maintain and defend the order of succession to the crown as established by parliament. He disclaimed all censure of those who had imposed, or those who had taken the oath, but declared it to be impossible that he should swear to the whole contents of it without offending against his own conscience; adding, that if they doubted whether his refusal proceeded from pure scruple of conscience or from his own phantasies, he was willing to satisfy their doubts by oath. The commissioners urged that he was the first who refused it; they showed him the subscriptions of all the lords and commoners who had sworn; they held out the king's sure displeasure at the single recusant. When he was called on a second time, they charged him with obstinacy for not mentioning any special part of the oath which wounded his conscience.*

He answered, that if he were to open his reasons for refusal farther, he should exasperate the king still more. He offered, however, to assign his reasons, if the lords would procure his highness's gracious assurance, that the avowal of the grounds of his

* Speaking of the oath he compared it to a two-edged sword: if he took it, his soul would suffer a wound; if he refused it, his body.

More's spirit, to use a figure of Lord Bacon's, was the "very *knee*, timber of honesty, knit in the natural fibre, and by no arts to be suppld or relaxed."

defence should not be considered as offensive to the king, nor prove dangerous to himself. The commissioners answered that such assurances would be no defence against a legal charge. He offered, however, to trust himself to the king's honour. Cranmer took some advantage of More's candour, urging that as he had disclaimed all blame of those who had sworn, it was evident that he thought it only doubtful whether the oath was unlawful; and desired him to consider whether the obligation to obey the king was not absolutely certain. He was struck with the subtlety of this reasoning, which took him by surprise, but not convinced of its solidity. Notwithstanding his surprise, he seems to have almost touched the true answer, that, as the oath contained a profession of opinion, such, for example, as the lawfulness of the king's marriage, on which men might differ, it might be declined by some and taken by others with equal honesty. Crumwell, whom More believed to favour him, loudly swore that he would rather see his only son had lost his head than that More had thus refused the oath. Crumwell bore the answer to the king, and chancellor Audley distinctly enjoined him to state very clearly More's willingness to swear to the succession. "Surely," said More, "as to swearing to the succession, I see no peril." Crumwell was not a good man, but the gentle virtue of More subdued even the bad. He never more returned to his house, being committed to the custody of the abbot of Westminster,* in which he continued four days: and at the end of that time he was conveyed to the Tower, on Friday the 17th of April, 1534.

It was very shortly after his commitment to the Tower, that he wrote the following letter to his darling daughter, Margaret, which contains a faithful and animated sketch of what passed before the

* William Benson was appointed abbot in 1510. He surrendered his abbey to Henry, by whom he was made Dean, and died in 1549.

council. It has no superscription, and is unsigned, a matter of prudent precaution, no doubt, in the situation in which he was placed.

“When I was before the Lords at Lambeth, I was the first that was called in, albeit that master Doctor, the vicar of Croydon [Hugh Latymer], was come before me and divers others. After the cause of my sending for declared unto me, (whereof I somewhat marvelled in my mind, considering that they sent for no more temporal men but me,) I desired the sight of the oath, which they showed me under the great seal. Then desired I the sight of the act of the succession, which was delivered me in a printed roll. After which read secretly by myself, and the other considered with the act, I showed unto them, that my purpose was not to put any fault either in the act or any man that made it, or in the oath of any man that swore it, nor to condemn the conscience of any other man. But as for myself, in good faith, my conscience so moved me in the matter, that though I would not deny to swear to the succession, yet unto that oath that there was offered me, I could not swear without the jeoparding of my soul to perpetual damnation. And if they doubted whether I did refuse the oath only for the grudge of my conscience, or for any other fantasy, I was ready therein to satisfy them by my oath: which if they trusted not, what should they be better to give me any oath. And if I trusted that I would therein swear true, then trusted I that, of their goodness, they would not move me to swear the oath that they offered me, perceiving that to swear it was against my own conscience. Unto this my lord chancellor said, that they were all very sorry to hear me say thus, and see me thus refuse the oath. And they all said, that on their faith, I was the very first that ever refused it, which would cause the king's highness to conceive great suspicion of me, and great indignation toward me. And therewith they showed me the

roll, and let me see the names of the lords and commoners who had sworn and subscribed their names already. Which notwithstanding when they saw that I refused to swear the same myself, not blaming any other man that had sworn, I was in conclusion commanded to go down into the garden. And thereupon I tarried in the old burned chamber that looketh into the garden, and would not go down because of the heat.

In that time saw I master Doctor Latymer come into the garden, and there walked he with diverse other doctors and chaplains of my lord of Canterbury. And very merry I saw him, for he laughed, and took one or two about the neck so handsomely, that if they had been women, I would have weened he had been waxed wanton. After that came master Doctor Wilson forth from the lords, and was with two gentlemen brought by me, and gentlemanly sent straight into the Tower. What time my lord of Rochester was called in before them, that I cannot tell; but at night I heard he had been before them, but where he had remained that night, and so forth, till he was sent hither, I never heard. I heard also that Master Vicar of Croydon, and all the remnant of the priests of London that were sent for, were sworn: and that they had such favour at the council's hand, that they were not lingered nor made to dance any long attendance to their trouble and cost, as suitors were sometimes wont to be, but were sped apace to their great comfort; so far forth, that master Vicar of Croydon, either for gladness or for dryness, or else that it might be seen, *Quod ille notus erat pontifici*; [that he was known to the prelate,] went to my lord's buttery-bar, and called for drink, and drank *valde familiariter*.

When they had played their pageant, and were gone out of the place, then was I called in again. And then was it declared unto me, that a number had sworn (even since I went aside) gladly without any sticking. Whersin I laid no blame to any man,

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but for my ownself answered as before. Now as well before as then, they somewhat laid unto me for obstinacy, that, whereas before and since I refused to swear, I would not declare any special part of that oath that grudged my conscience, and open the cause wherefore. For thereunto I had said unto them, that I feared lest the king's highness would, as they said, take displeasure enough towards me, for the only refusal of the oath. And that if I should open and disclose the causes why, I should therewith but further exasperate his highness, which I would in no wise do, but rather would I abide all the danger and harm that might come towards me, than give his highness any occasion of further displeasure, than the offering of the oath unto me of pure necessity constrained me. Howbeit when they diverse times imputed this unto me for stubbornness and obstinacy, that I would neither swear the oath, nor yet declare the causes why, I declared thus far to them, that rather than I would be accounted for obstinate, I would upon the king's gracious license, or rather his such commandment had as might be my sufficient warrant that my declaration should not offend his highness, nor put me in the danger of any of his statutes, I would be content to declare the causes in writing, and over that to give an oath in the beginning, that if I might find those causes by any man in such wise answered, as I might think mine own conscience satisfied, I would, after that, with all mine heart, swear the principal oath too. To this I was answered, that, though the king should give me license under his letters patent, yet would it not serve against the statute. Whereunto I said, that yet if I had them, I would stand unto the trust of his honour at my peril for the remnant. But thinketh me now, that if I may not declare the cause without peril, then to leave them undeclared is no obstinacy. My lord of Canterbury taking hold upon what I said, that I condemned not the consciences

of them that swore, said unto me : That it appeared well, that I did not take it for a very sure thing and a certain that I might not lawfully swear it, but rather as a thing uncertain and doubtful. But then (said my lord) you know for a certainty and a thing without doubt, that you be bounden to obey your sovereign lord the king. And therefore are ye bounden to leave off the doubt of your unsure conscience in refusing the oath, and take the sure way in obeying your prince and swear it.

Now albeit, that in mine own mind I thought myself not concluded, yet this argument seemed to me suddenly so subtle, and namely with such authority coming out of so noble a prelate's mouth, that I could again answer nothing thereto, but only that I thought myself I might not well do so, because that in my conscience this was one of the cases, in which I was bounden that I should not obey my prince, since, whatsoever other folks thought in the matter (whose conscience or learning I would not condemn nor take upon me to judge), yet in my conscience, the truth seemed on the other side ; wherein I had informed my conscience neither suddenly nor slightly, but by long leisure and diligent search for the matter. And of truth, if that reason may conclude, then have we a ready way to avoid all perplexities. For in whatsoever matter the doctors stand in great doubt, the king's commandment given upon whither side he list, solveth all the doubts. Then said my lord of Westminster to me, that howsoever the matter seemed unto mine own mind, I had cause to fear that mine own mind was erroneous, when I see the great council of the realm determine of my mind the contrary, and that therefore I ought to change my conscience.* To that I answered, that if there were no more but myself upon my side, and the whole parliament upon

* Burnet's reflections upon the abbot's reasoning is just and acute : " It was very fit for so rich an abbot, and discovered the temper of his conscience."

the other, I would be sore afraid to lean to mine own mind only against so many. But on the other side, if it so be that in some things for which I refuse the oath, I have, as I think I have, upon my part as great a council and a greater too, I am not then bounden to change my conscience, and conform it to the council of one realm, against the general council of Christendom. Upon this master Secretary, as he that tenderly favoureth me, said and swore a great oath, that he had rather that his own only son (which is of truth a goodly young gentleman, and shall I trust come to much worship) had lost his head, than that I should thus have refused the oath. For surely the king's highness would now conceive a great suspicion against me, and think that the matter of the nun of Canterbury was all contrived by my drift. To which I said, that the contrary was true and well known. And whatsoever should mishap me, it lay not in my power to help it without the peril of my soul. Then did my lord chancellor repeat before me my refusal unto master secretary, as one that was going unto the king's grace. And in the rehearsing, his lordship repeated again that I denied not but was content to swear unto the succession. Whereunto I said, that as for that point I would be content, so that I might see my oath in that point so framed, in such a manner as might stand with my conscience. Then said my lord: 'Marry! master secretary, mark that too; that he will not swear that neither, but under some certain manner.' 'Verily, no, my lord,' quoth I, 'but that I will see it made in such wise first, as I shall myself see, that I shall neither be forsworn, nor swear against my conscience. Surely as to swear to the succession I see no peril. But I thought and think it reason that to mine own oath I look well myself, and be of counsel also in the fashion, and never intended to swear for a piece, and set my hand to the whole oath. Howbeit, so help me God, as touching the whole oath, I never withdrew any man from

it, nor ever advised any to refuse it, nor ever put nor will put any scruple in any man's head, but leave every one to his own conscience. And methinketh, in good faith, that so were it good reason that every man should leave me to mine."

During the time that Sir Thomas remained in the custody of the abbot of Westminster, the king consulted with his council as to the best measures to be taken with him. It is to the credit of Cranmer, that at this critical moment, he interposed in behalf of Sir Thomas and Bishop Fisher. He wrote the following letter to Crumwell, which as being an unequivocal testimony of the estimation in which More and his opinions were held, demands a place here.

Archbishop Cranmer to Secretary Crumwell.

Right worshipful Mr. Crumwell:—After most hearty commendations, &c., I doubt not but that you do right well remember, that my lord of Rochester and Mr. More were content to be sworn to the act of the king's succession, but not to the preamble of the same. What was the cause of their refusal thereof I am uncertain, and they would by no means express the same. Nevertheless, it must needs be, either the diminution of the authority of the bishop of Rome, or else the reprobation of the king's first *pretended* matrimony.

But if they do absolutely persist in their opinions of the preamble, yet me seemeth it should not be refused, if they will be sworn to the very act of succession; so that they will be sworn to maintain the same against all powers and potentates. For hereby shall be a great occasion to satisfy the Princess Dowager, and the lady Mary, who do think that they should damn their souls if they should abandon and relinquish their estates. And not only it should stop the mouths of them, but also of the emperor and other their friends, if they give as much credence to my lord of Rochester and Mr. More speaking or doing

against them, as they hitherto have done, and thought that others should have done, when they spake and did with them. And peradventure, it would be a good quietation to many others within this realm, if such men should say, that the succession comprised within the said act, is good according to God's laws. For then I think there is not one within this realm who could ever reclaim against it.

And whereas diverse persons, either of a wilfulness will not, or of an indurate and invertable conscience cannot, alter from their opinions of the king's first pretended marriage (wherein they have once said their minds, and for ever have a persuasion in their head, that, if they should now vary therefrom, their fame and estimation were distained for ever), or else of the authority of the bishop of Rome : yet, if all the realm, with one accord, would apprehend the said succession, in my judgment it is a thing to be embraced. Which thing, although I trust surely in God that it shall be brought to pass, yet hereunto might not a little avail the consent and oaths of these two persons, the Bishop of Rochester and Mr. More, with their adherents, or rather confederates. And if the King's pleasure so were, their said oaths might be suppressed, *but* [except] when and where His Highness might take some commodity by the publishing of the same. Thus our Lord have you ever in his conservation. From my manor at Croydon, the 17th day of April. Your own assured ever

THOMAS CANTUAR.

But this judicious advice was not followed. There was an influence behind the throne, more powerful than the throne itself, and it prevailed against feeling and justice. Let us hear Roper upon this point. A disposition was at first shown to discharge Sir Thomas, upon his taking an oath, in which the matter of the Supremacy was not to appear ; and it

would have been done, had not Anne Boleyn, and her party, by their importunate clamours so sorely exasperated the King against him, that, contrary to his former resolution, he caused the said oath of Supremacy to be administered to him. When the authorities came to tender it, he excused himself in a discreet and respectful manner; but the command was imperative. On his ultimate refusal, orders arrived for his committal to the Tower, to which he was accordingly conveyed on Friday the 17th of April, in the custody of Sir Richard Southwell.*

They entered a boat, and proceeded down the river to the place of destination. On their way, Sir Richard, pointing to the gold chain which More had about his neck, took the liberty of dropping a hint as to the precaution of his sending it home to his wife, or to one of his daughters. "Nay, Sir," said More, with his accustomed vivacity, "that I will never do. As I am a knight, I would not have it said that when my enemies took me in the field, they did not fare the better for their prize." On their landing, they found the Lieutenant was ready at the Tower gate to receive them; and on reaching the lodge, the porter, according to the unfeeling usage of the time, demanded his perquisite of office, which consisted of the prisoner's upper garment. "Marry, good Master Porter," said Sir Thomas, "here it is," taking off his cap, and observing; "Here is my uppermost piece of dress, and sorry I am it is no better." Cerberus, however, was not to be soothed by a sop like this; "Sir," quoth he, "I must have your gown"—and his gown he had.

He was allowed to have one of his servants to at-

* Sir Richard Southwell was the father of Robert Southwell, the Jesuit, who was a martyr to his faith under Elizabeth (1595); and whose admirable productions, both in prose and verse, have been the delight of men of taste, of every creed. A future number of THE CATHOLIC FAMILY LIBRARY will make our readers acquainted with his Life and Writings, and with the memorable epoch in which he flourished.

tend him. The man's name was John a Wood, who could neither read nor write. Care was, however, taken to swear him, that if he should see or hear any thing spoken or written against the King, the council, or the state of the realm, he should immediately reveal it to the Lieutenant. When More was shown by that officer to his apartment, and treated with all the delicacy his situation would allow, he turned to him, and with all that elasticity of mind which nothing could destroy, observed : " Good Master Lieutenant, methinks I shall have no reason to mislike my fare ; but whenever I do, don't spare me, I beg of you, but thrust me at once out of your doors."

CHAPTER VIII.

1534—1535. *ÆTAT.* 55.

MORE IN THE TOWER—PROJECT OF HIS DAUGHTER MARGARET—CORRESPONDENCE OF MRS. ALINGTON AND MARGARET—PRIVATE EXAMINATIONS OF MORE IN THE TOWER—HIS TRIAL—DEFENCE—REPLY TO RICH—HIS SENTENCE—INTERROGATORIES PUT TO HIM AFTER HIS TRIAL—HIS EXECUTION.

More in the Tower—His firmness and resignation—Margaret's singular project for obtaining admission to her father—More's letter to her on the subject—Their interview—More's wife and family obtain access to him—Alice's conversation—Letter of Mrs. Alington to Margaret—Her account of a visit from the new chancellor—Her exertions in behalf of More—Margaret to Mrs. Alington—Account of her visit to her father—Shows him Mrs. Alington's letter, and his comments thereon—Margaret acknowledges to her father her having taken the oath, and reasons with him on the subject—More's communication with Bishop Fisher, and Dr. Wilson—It reaches the ear of the council and excites their suspicions—More is deprived of his books, papers, and writing materials—Anecdote—He is compelled to write his communications, &c. with a coal—He is privately examined by the council—His account of the same in a letter to Margaret—Execution of Reynolds and his companions—More is brought to trial in the Court of King's Bench, Westminster—His appearance after his imprisonment—His answer to the long and complicated indictment drawn out against him—Proves its insufficiency—Rich's treachery, and More's reproof—He is found guilty—His unreserved statement of his sentiments on the Supremacy—His sentence mitigated into decapitation—Anecdote—Affecting scene between Mar-

garet and her father—Interrogatories administered to him after his trial—His firmness, piety, and resignation—His last letter to Margaret—He receives notice to prepare for death—His gaiety to the last—Execution—Burial—Character.

WE are now touching on the period that is to terminate the career of the illustrious subject of our memoir. During the first month More's confinement in the Tower was rigorous; no member of his family, not even his beloved Margaret, being permitted to have access to him; "and yet," says Cresacre, "not for one moment did his wonted cheerfulness forsake him, as we afterwards learned from his warder."* But though denied the happiness of seeing her father, yet, with a feeling worthy of such a daughter, Margaret had written him the following letter, and contrived to have it conveyed to his solitary abode.

"Mine own good Father!—It is to me no little comfort, since I cannot talk with you by such means as I would, at the least way to delight myself in this bitter time of your absence, by such means as I may, by as often writing to you as shall be expedient, and by reading again and again your most fruitful and delectable letter, the faithful messenger of your very virtuous and ghostly mind, rid from all corrupt love of worldly things, and fast knit only in the love of God and desire of heaven, as becometh a very true worshipper and a faithful servant of God. He, I doubt not, good Father, holdeth his holy hand over you, and shall as he hath done, preserve you both body and soul, (*ut sit mens sana in corpore sano*); and namely, now when you have abjected all earthly consolations, and for his love resigned yourself willingly, gladly, and fully to his holy protection. Father, what think you hath been our comfort since your de-

* *Animus æquus optimum est ærumnæ condimentum. Plautus.*

For equanimity's a seasoning

Can make the bitterest fortune palatable.

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parting from us? Surely, the experience we have have had of your life past, and godly conversation, and wholesome counsel, and virtuous example, and a surety not only of the continuance of the same, but also a great increase, by the goodness of our Lord, to the great rest and gladness of your heart, devoid of all earthly dregs and garnished with the noble vesture of heavenly virtues, a pleasant palace for the Holy Spirit of God to rest in, who defend you (as I doubt not, good Father, but of his goodness he will) from all trouble of mind and of body; and give me, your most loving obedient daughter and handmaid, and all of us your children and friends, to follow that which we praise in you, and to our only comfort remember, and, coming together of you, that we may in conclusion meet with you, mine own dear Father, in the bliss of Heaven, to which our most merciful Lord hath brought us with his precious blood.

“Your own most loving obedient daughter and beadswoman Margaret Roper, who desireth above all worldly things to be in John a Wood’s stead, to do you some service. But we live in hope that we shall shortly receive you again. I pray God heartily we may, if it be his holy will.”

To this letter Margaret obtained no answer. Her father, anxious as he felt to acknowledge this testimony of love, was too closely watched to be able to reply. The pain of disappointment sharpened her invention, and ingenuity devised what ordinary calculation would have failed to discover. In hours of severest trial, woman has often shown herself possessed of resources denied to him who claims to be her superior. Of this truth did Margaret, in the instance before us, exhibit a very striking example. The pious yearnings of a daughter’s heart were to be satisfied, and love devised the means, daring, if not desperate, as they might appear to a less resolute spirit. Her father’s whole soul was known to her, and of his inflexible principles respecting the

question of the Supremacy, she was fully aware ; and yet it was on that very point that her device turned in order to gain access to the father she so fondly and so devotedly loved. But how was this difficult and hazardous project to be accomplished ? and yet accomplished it was, and with more than a politician's address, for she outwitted the subtle Crumwell himself. Let Rastell tell the story. " After Sir Thomas had been in prison a month's space, or so, his daughter Margaret, anxiously desiring to see him, wittily invented this craft.—She wrote a letter, wherein she seemed to labour to persuade him to take the oath, and sent it to her father, nothing doubting that it would be intercepted and carried to Crumwell, and that it would be the means of gaining her access to her father : and the sleight succeeded.

Cresacre's account of the matter is as follows : " Margaret Roper sent her father a letter wherein she *seemed* somewhat to labour to persuade him to take the oath (*though she nothing so thought*) to win thereby credence with master Thomas Crumwell, that she might the rather get liberty to have free resort to her father (which she only had) during the greater time of his imprisonment." This draws forth from Sir J. Mackintosh, the following reflection : " It would be blameable to seek for bad motives in the case of so merciful an alleviation of punishment, as the King's license for Margaret Roper to resort to her father in the Tower."

While we admire the humanity that dictated this sentence, we are obliged to confess that the claims of truth are imperative, and must take the precedence of every other feeling, however amiable in itself. Truth, then, compels us to confess, that such " bad motives " did operate in the instance before us ; and that, in order to gain his ends, Crumwell did not scruple to tamper with a daughter's tenderest feelings, in order to convert them into an undue influence over the mind of a parent,

and that this was made the price of her permission to visit her father.

More being, of course, unaware of his daughter's motive in writing him such a letter, returns her an answer full of rebuke, and yet breathing the most tender affection, and bespeaking the most delicate regard for her judgment.

More to his daughter Margaret.

Our Lord bless you!—If I had not been, my dearly beloved daughter, at a firm and fast point, I trust in God's great mercy, this good great while before, your lamentable letter had not a little abashed me, surely far above all other things, of which I hear diverse times not a few terrible towards me. But surely they all touched me never so near, nor were so grievous unto me, as to see you, my well beloved child, in such vehement piteous manner, labour to persuade unto me the thing wherein I have, of pure necessity for respect unto mine own soul, so often given you so precise answer before. Wherein as touching the points of your lettér, I can make none answer. For I doubt not that you well remember that the matters which move my conscience, (without declaration whereof I can nothing touch the points,) I have sundry times shewed you that I will disclose them to no man. And therefore, daughter Margaret, I can in this thing no further, but like as you labour me again to follow your mind, to desire and pray you both again to leave off such labour, and with my former answers to hold yourself content.* A deadly grief unto me, and much more deadly than to hear of mine own death (for the fear thereof, I thank Our Lord, the fear of hell, the hope of heaven, and the passion

* Rastell records this trait in his cousin Margaret's character,—"She could give the very best of counsel, and follow it too—a thing very rare in a woman!" Margaret had taken the oath with this condition annexed—in so far as it was agreeable with the law of God."

of Christ daily more and more assuage,) is, that I perceive my good son your husband, and you my good daughter, and my good wife, and mine other good children and innocent friends, in great displeasure and danger of great harm thereby. The *let* [hindrance] whereof while it lieth not in my hand, I can no further but commit all to God. *Nam in manu Dei*, (saith the Scripture) *cor regis est, et sicut divisiones aquarum, quocunque voluerit impellit illud.*—For the heart of the king is in the hand of God, and like the waves of the sea, he impels it wherever he will. Whose high goodness I humbly beseech to incline the noble heart of the king's highness to the tender favour of you all, and to favour me no better than God and myself know that my faithful heart towards him and my daily prayer for him do deserve. For surely if his highness might inwardly see my true mind such as God knoweth it is, it would (I trust) somewhat assuage his high displeasure. Which while I can in this world never in such wise show, but that his grace may be persuaded to believe the contrary of me, I can no further go, but put all in the hands of Him, for fear of whose displeasure, for the safeguard of my soul, stirred by mine own conscience, (without insecution or reproach laying to any other man's,) I suffer and endure this trouble. Out of which I beseech him to bring me, when his will shall be, into his endless bliss of heaven, and in the mean while, give me grace, and you both, in all our agonies and troubles, devoutly to resort prostrate unto the remembrance of that bitter agony, which our Saviour suffered before his passion at the Mount. And if we diligently so do, I verily trust we shall find therein great comfort and consolation. And thus, my dear daughter, the blessed spirit of Christ, by his tender mercy govern and guide you all, to his pleasure and your wealth and comfort both of body and soul. Your tender loving Father,
THOMAS MORE, KNIGHT.

It was towards the close of May, when Margaret obtained the accomplishment of her earnest desire, for which she had so boldly and so successfully struggled. No sooner was the door opened to her father's apartment, than in an instant she was in his arms, and clung round his neck in a long and silent embrace.* More then fell on his knees, and his daughter following his example, joined him in those acts of devotion, with which he sanctified all his actions; and which, in the present instance, served to restore that calm of mind which the sudden entrance of her he loved first and best had for a moment disturbed. Then rising, and once again embracing his daughter, he looked fondly upon her, and said in his usual cheerful tone: "Well, I verily believe, Meg, that they who have put me here, ween they have done me a high displeasure. But I assure thee, on my faith, mine own good daughter, if it had not been for my wife, and ye who be my children, I should not have failed long ere this to have been enclosed in as straight a room, and straighter too. But, since I am come hither without my own desert, I trust that God of his goodness will discharge me of my care, and with his gracious help supply my lack among ye. I find no cause, I thank God, Meg, to reckon myself in worse case here than at home; for methinks God maketh me a wanton, and setteth me on his lap and dandleth me."

When Margaret prepared to leave the prison, he placed in her hand the following note to his family, which she secreted in her bosom:

TO MY LOVING FRIENDS:—Forasmuch as being in prison, I cannot tell what need I may have, or of what necessity I may hap to stand in, I heartily beseech you all, that if my well-beloved daughter, Margaret

* Deep joys and griefs to the same issue come:
Thus murmur shallow brooks, the deep are dumb.
Sir W. Raleigh.

Roper, who alone of all my friends hath, by the king's gracious favour, license to resort to me, should anything desire of any of you, of such things as I may hap to need, that it may like you less to regard and tender it, than if I moved it unto you, and required it of you, personally present myself. And I beseech you all to pray for me, and I shall pray for you. Your faithful lover and poor beadsman,

THOMAS MORE, KNIGHT, Prisoner.

Margaret must have looked upon this little document as an additional proof of the depth of her father's regard and confidence.

Some short time after Margaret's visit to her father, his wife and the rest of his family obtained permission to see him. Alice, as we have already had occasion to remark, was an excellent housewife, but she was a stranger to that dignity, not to say delicacy of character, which we are taught to look for in the wife of such a man. To use Cresacre's language: "at her first entrance to his chamber, like a plain good woman, and somewhat worldly too, she thus bluntly saluted him; 'Why, Mr. More, I marvel much that you, who have hitherto been taken for a wise man, will now so play the fool, as to lie here in this close filthy prison, and be content to be shut up with mice and rats (and here she turned up her nose), when you might be abroad at your liberty, with the favour and good-will both of the king and the council, if you would but do as all the bishops and best learned men of his realm have done.'" She then enlarged upon his "right fair house at Chelsea, his library, books, gallery, garden, and orchard, and the being merry in company with me your good wife, your children, and household; and raising her voice at the conclusion, she thus added: 'Yea, in God's name, I muse what you mean by still fondly tarrying here!' More bore it all in his usual kindly and playful way, contriving always to blend religious feelings

with his quaintness and humour. 'Why, good Alice,' said he, with that winning smile of his which nothing could repress, 'tell me one thing'—'And pray what is that?' said she. 'Is not this house as near Heaven as mine own?' She answered him in her customary exclamation of contempt; 'Oh, tilly vally, tilly vally!' He treated her harsh language as a wholesome exercise for his patience, and replied with equal mildness, though with more gravity, 'How, say'st thou, Alice? Is it not so indeed?'—'Bone Deus! man,' was Alice's hasty reply; 'will this *gear* [matter] be never given over?'—'Nay then, Alice,' continued More, 'if it be so, I see no great cause why I should joy in my fair house, or in any thing belonging thereunto, when if I should have been buried in my grave but seven years, and rise and come hither again,* I should not fail to find some therein that would bid me get out of doors and tell me plainly it were none of mine. What cause, then, have I to like such a house, as would so soon forget its master!' Alice was a testy soul, but she did not want feeling, and these allusions had the effect of subduing her spirit. More perceived the effect of his words, and patting her on the cheek—'Now, good mistress Alice,' said he, 'do tell me how long you think one might live to enjoy this house of ours?'—'Perhaps some twenty years.'—'Well now, my good Alice, if you had said some thousand, nay some hundred years even, it had been somewhat; and yet he were a very bad calculator that would risk the losing of an eternity for some hundred or thousand years. But what, if we are not sure of enjoying our possessions a single day?' Thus it was that More's habitual good-humour never forsook him, and nothing, to use Cresacre's remark, "could be a surer proof that all was at ease from within." "

* "He might have said but seven months," adds Cresacre in a parenthesis.

And here, it would be unjust not to allege in excuse for Alice, that she was not without cause for being out of humour. "Right fair as was her house at Chelsea," that evil genius the *res angusta domi*—want and her attendant ills, had taken up their abode within its once happy walls. This we gather from the following letter, which accident has preserved, and which tells the tale more effectually than whole pages could do.

Mistress Alice More to Secretary Crumwell.

To the Right Honourable, and her especial good master. Master Secretary—In my most humble wise I recommend me to your good mastership, acknowledging myself to be most deeply bounden to you, for your manifold goodness and loving favour, before this time, and now daily shown towards my poor husband and me. I pray Almighty God, to continue your goodness so still, for thereupon hangeth the greatest part of my poor husband's comfort and mine. The cause of my writing at this time, is to certify your especial good mastership of my great and extreme necessity; who, on and besides the charge of mine own house, do pay weekly fifteen shillings for the board-wages of my poor husband and his servant,* for the maintaining whereof, I have been compelled, of very necessity, to sell part of my own apparel, for lack of other substance to make money of. Wherefore my most humble petition and suit to your mastership, at this time, is to desire your advice and counsel, whether I may be so bold as to attend upon the king's most gracious highness. I trust there is no doubt in this case of any impediment; for the young man, being a ploughman, had been diseased with the ague for the space of three weeks before he departed. And besides this, it is now five weeks since it departed, and no other person diseased in the house

* A curious fact is here disclosed, that the state prisoners at the period in question were supported at the expense of their own families.

since that time.* Wherefore I most humbly beseech your especial good mastership (as my only trust is, and else know not what to do, but utterly in this world to be undone), for the love of God to consider the premises; and thereupon of your most abundant goodness, to show your most favourable help to the comforting of my poor husband and me, in this our great heaviness, extreme age, and necessity. And thus we, and all ours, shall daily, during our lives, pray to God for the prosperous success of your right honourable dignity.

By your poor continual oratrix,

Dame ALICE MORE.†

The following correspondence that passed in the August next after Sir Thomas's imprisonment, between Margaret Roper and Mrs. Alice Alington, the married daughter of Alice by her first husband, is so full of interest in itself, and throws so much light upon Sir Thomas's private history at this period, that it is matter of surprise his biographers should have neglected to avail themselves of materials so important. The letters are preserved in Rastell's Edition of More's Works. (1557.)

Alice Alington to Margaret Roper.

SISTER ROPER :—With all my heart I recommend me to you, thanking you for all kindness. The cause of my writing at this time, is to show you, that, within two hours after my coming home, my Lord Chancellor [Audley] did come to take a course at buck in our Park, the which was to my husband a great comfort, that it would please him so to do. When he had taken his pleasure and killed his deer, he went to Sir Thomas Barneston's to bed; where I was the next day with him at his desire, the which I

* Doubtless the recent prevalence of the Sweating Sickness had been the cause of the great precautions alluded to in this passage.

† From Dr. Howard's *Collection*, 1753.

could not say nay to, for methought he did bid me very heartily: and most especially because I would speak to him for my father. And when I saw my time, I did desire him, as humbly as I could, that he would (as I have heard say he had been) be still good lord unto my father. First, he answered me, that he would be as glad to do for him, as for his own father, and that, he said, did very well appear when the matter of the nun was laid to his charge. And as for this other matter, he marvelled that my father is so obstinate in his own conceit, in that every body went forth withal, save only the blind bishop and he. And, in good faith, said my Lord, I am very glad that I have no learning, but in a few of Æsop's fables, of the which I shall tell you one. There was a country in which there were almost none but fools, saving a few who were wise, and they by their wisdom knew that there should fall a great rain, the which should make all them fools that were wet therewith. They, seeing that, made them a cave under the ground till the rain was passed. Then came they forth, thinking to make the fools do what they list, and to rule them as they would. But the fools would none of that, and would have the rule themselves for all their craft. And when the wise men saw that they could not obtain their purpose, they wished they had been in the rain, and had wet their clothes with them. When this tale was told, my Lord did laugh very merrily. Then I said to him, that, for all his merry fable, I put no doubt that he would be good Lord unto my father, when he saw his time. He said, I would not have your father so scrupulous of his conscience. And then he told me another fable of a lion, an ass, and a wolf, and of their confession. First, the lion confessed that he had devoured all the beasts he could come by. His confessor *assoiled* [absolved] him, because he was a king, and also it was his nature so to do. Then came the poor ass, and said that he took but one straw out of his master's shoe for hunger, by

means whereof he thought that his master did take cold. His confessor could not assoil this great trespass, but by and by he sent him to the bishop. Then came the wolf and made his confession, and he was straitly commanded that he should not pass sixpence at a meal. But when the said wolf had used this but a little while, he waxed very hungry, insomuch that on a day when he saw a cow with a calf come by him, he said to himself, I am very hungry, and fain would I eat, but that I am bound by my ghostly father. Notwithstanding that, my conscience shall judge me; and if that be so, then shall my conscience be thus—that the cow doth seem to me but worth a groat; and if the cow be but worth a groat, then is the calf but worth sixpence. So did the wolf eat both the cow and the calf. Now, my good sister, hath not my Lord told me two pretty fables? In good faith they pleased me nothing, for I wist not what to say, and I was abashed of this answer. And I see no better suit than to Almighty God, for he is the comforter of all sorrows, and will not fail his servants when they have most need. Thus, fare ye well, my own good sister. Written the Monday after St. Lawrence, [August 13th,] in haste,

Your sister,
ALICE ALINGTON.

Margaret Roper to Alice Alington.

SISTER ALINGTON :—When I came next unto my father, methought it both convenient and necessary to show him your letter : convenient, that he might see your loving labour taken for him : necessary, since he might perceive thereby, that if he stood still in this scruple of his conscience, (so at least it is called by many that are his friends, and by his wife,) all his friends that seem most able to do him good, either shall finally forsake him, or, peradventure, not be able indeed to do him any good at all. For these causes, at my next being with him, after your letter received, when I had awhile

talked with him, first of his diseases, both of his breast of old, and of his reins anew, and of the cramp also that divers nights grieveth him in the legs, and that I found by his words they were not much increased, but continued after the manner that they did before, sometimes very sore, and sometimes little grief, and as at that time I found him out of pain, and, as one in his case might, meetly, well-minded, after our Seven Psalms and the Litany said, to sit and talk, and be merry, beginning first with other things, of the good comfort of my mother, and the good order of my brother and all my sisters, disposing themselves every day, more by more, to set little by the world, and draw more and more to God; and that his household, his neighbours, and other good friends abroad, diligently remembered him in their prayers, I added: I pray God, good father, that their prayers, and ours, and your own therewith, may purchase of God the grace, that you may in this great matter (for which you stand in this trouble, and for your trouble, all we also that love you) take such a way by time, as, standing with the pleasure of God, may content and please the king, whom ye have always found so singularly gracious unto you, that, if we were stiffly to refuse to do the thing that were his pleasure, which, God not displeased, you might do (as many great, wise, and well-learned men say, that, in this thing, you may), it would both be a great blot in your worship in every wise man's opinion, and as myself have heard some say, whom yourself have always taken for well-learned and good, a peril unto your soul also. But as for that point, farther I will not be bold to dispute upon, since I trust in God, and your good mind, that you will look surely thereto; and your learning I know for such, that I wot well you can. But, one thing is there which I, and other your friends perceive abroad, which, if it be not shown you, you may, peradventure, to your great peril mistake, and

I hope shall be likely to fall to you for less harm, than I sore fear me, for, as for good, I wot well that in this world, of this matter at least, ye look for none. I tell you, father, that I have received a letter of late from my sister Alington, by which I see well, that, if ye change not your mind, ye are likely to lose all those friends that are about to do you any good. Or if ye *leese* [lose] not their good will, you shall at least leese the effect thereof, for any good that they shall be able to do you. With this my father smiled upon me and said, "What! mistress Eve, as I called you when you came *first* [on a former occasion], hath my daughter Alington played the serpent with you, and with a letter set you a work to come tempt your father again: and for the favour that you bear him, labour to make him swear against his conscience, and to send him to the devil?" And after that he looked sadly again, and earnestly said to me, "Daughter Margaret, we two have talked this thing over twice or thrice; and the same tale in effect that you tell me now, and the same fears too, have you twice told me before, and I have twice answered you, that, if in this matter it were possible for me to content the king's grace, and God therewith not offended, there hath no man taken this oath already more gladly than I would do; as one that reckoneth himself more deeply bounden than any other to the king's highness, for his singular bounty many ways showed to me. But since, standing my conscience, I can in no wise do it, and that for instructing my conscience in this matter I have not slightly considered, but many years advised and studied, and never yet could see nor hear the thing, nor I think ever shall, that could induce my mind to think otherwise, I have no manner of remedy; God hath placed me in this strait, that either I must deadly displease him, or abide any worldly harm that, for any other sins, he shall, under the name of this thing, suffer to fall upon me.

Which thing, as I have before told you, I have, ere I came here, not left unbethought or unconsidered the very worst and uttermost that can by possibility befall. And albeit that I know my own frailty full well and the natural faintness of my own heart, yet, if I had not trusted that God would give me strength rather to endure all things than offend him by swearing ungodly against my conscience, you may be very sure I should not have come here. And as in this matter I look only to God, it concerns me but little though men call it as it please them, and say it is no conscience, but a foolish scruple."

At this word, I took a good occasion, and said to him thus: "In good faith, father, for my part, I neither do, nor would it become me to mistrust your good mind, or your learning. But as you say that some call it but a scruple, I assure you that I see in my sister's letter, one of the highest estates in this realm; and a man learned too, as I dare say yourself shall think when you know him, and whom you have already effectually proved for your tender friend and very special good lord, accounteth your conscience, in this matter, for a right simple scruple. And you may be sure he saith it of good mind, and layeth no little cause therein; for he saith, where you say your conscience moveth you, all the nobles of this realm, and almost all other men too, go boldly forth with the contrary, and none stick thereat, save only yourself and one other man, who, though he be right good and very learned, yet mean I that few that love you, give you the counsel, against all other men to cleave to his mind alone." And at this word I gave him your letter that he might see my words were not feigned but spoken by him, whom he loveth and esteemeth highly. Thereupon he read over your letter. And when he came to the end, he began it afresh, and read it over again; and in the reading he made no manner of haste, but advised it leisurely and pointed every word. And after that he paused,

and then he said: "Forsooth, daughter Margaret, I find my daughter Alington such as I have ever found her, and I trust ever shall, as naturally minding of me as you that are mine own. Howbeit, her take I verily for mine own too, since I have married her mother, and brought her up from a child, as I have brought up you, in other things and in learning both, wherein I thank God, she findeth now some fruit, and bringeth her son up very virtuously and well. Therefore God, I thank him, hath sent her good store, our Lord preserve them, and send her much joy of them, and my good son, her gentle husband too, and have mercy on the soul of mine other good son, her first. I am daily a beadsman, and so write her, for them all. In this matter she hath used herself like herself—wisely, and like a very daughter towards me, and at the end of the letter giveth as good counsel as any man, that wit hath, could wish. God give me grace to follow it, and God reward her for it. Now, daughter Margaret, as for my lord, I not only think, but have also found, that he is undoubtedly my singular good lord. And in my other business concerning the silly nun, as my cause was good and clear, so was he my good lord therein, and master secretary my good master too. For this I shall never cease to be faithful beadsman for them both, and daily do I, by my troth, pray for them, as I pray for myself. And whenever it shall happen,—which I trust in God shall never happen—that I be found other than a true man to my prince, let them never favour me neither of them, nor, in troth, could it become them so to do. But in this matter, Meg, to tell the truth between thee and me, my lord's *Æsop's* fables do not greatly move me. But as his wisdom for his pastime merely told them to mine own daughter, so shall I for my pastime answer them to thee, Meg, for mine. The first fable of the rain that washed away all their wits, that stood abroad when it fell, I have heard oft ere

this, it being a tale so often told among the king's council by my lord cardinal, when his grace was chancellor, that I cannot lightly forget it. In times past, when variance began to fall between the emperor and the French king, so that they fell together at war, there were in the council sundry opinions, in which some thought it wisdom that we should sit still, and let them alone; but evermore against this my lord used the fable of the wise men. And so said his grace, if we like them, would be so wise as to sit in peace, while the fools fought, they could not fail after to make peace and agree, and fall at length altogether upon us. I will never more dispute upon his grace's counsel, and I trust we never made war but as reason would. But, yet this did, in his days, help the king and the realm to spend many a fair penny. But that gear is passed, and his grace is gone, our lord assoil his soul! Howbeit daughter Roper, whom my lord here taketh for the wise men, and whom for the fools, I cannot very well guess; I cannot very well read such riddles; I may say, you wot well, *non sum Œdipus, sed. MORUS*—which word, what it signifieth in Greek, I need not tell you. But I trust my lord reckoneth me among the fools, as my name in Greek would import. But surely among those that long to be rulers, God and my conscience know, that no man can reckon me. It is well known that the king of his goodness made me a ruler in this noble realm, and that, at my own great labour, I was by his goodness discharged. But whomsoever my lord mean by the fools and the wise, I beseech our lord to make us all so wise, that we may, every man, rule ourselves wisely in this time of tears, this vale of miseries, this simple wretched world, that when we shall hence in haste, to meet the great spouse, we be not taken as sleepers, nor for lack of light in our lamps be shut out of Heaven among the foolish virgins.

As to the second fable, I see not how that can well

be Æsop's as the matter turns on confession. But what matter who made it? Yet surely is it somewhat too subtle for me. By the foolish scrupulous ass, his lordship's other words show that he meant me. He thinketh the thing but a trifle, and as you told me, Margaret, right now, so think many, as well spiritual as temporal, and that even of those whom for their learning and virtue I not a little esteem. And yet believe I not very surely that every man so thinketh that so saith. But though they did, daughter, that would not make much to me, not though I should see my lord of Rochester say the same, and swear the oath himself before me. For, whereas you told me right now, that such, as love me, would not advise me, against all other men, to lean upon his mind alone; verily, daughter, no more I do. For albeit of very truth, I have him in that reverend estimation; that I reckon in this realm no one man, in wisdom, learning, and long approved virtue, meet to be matched with him, yet, that in this matter I was not led by him, plainly appeared both in that I refused the oath before it was offered him, and also that his lordship was content to have sworn to that oath either somewhat more, or in some other manner than ever I minded to do. Verily, daughter, I never intended to pin my soul to another man's back, not even the best man that I know this day living, for I know not whither he may happen to carry it. There is no man living of whom, while he liveth, I may make myself sure. Some may act through favour, and some through fear, and so might they carry my soul some wrong way. And some may happen to frame himself a conscience, and think, that, while he did it for fear, God would forgive it. And some may, peradventure, think that they will repent and be shriven thereof, and that so shall God remit it them. And some may, peradventure, be of the mind, that if they say one thing, and think the while the contrary, God more regardeth

their heart than their tongue, and therefore that their oath goeth upon that they think, and not upon that they say: as a woman reasoned once, I trow, daughter, you being by. But, in good faith, Margaret, I can use no such ways in so great a matter; but as if mine own conscience served me, I would not *let* [hesitate] to do it, though other men refused, so, though others do it, I dare not, my own conscience standing against it. If I had, as I told you, looked but lightly on the matter, I should have cause to fear; but now have I so looked on it so long, that, I purpose at least to have no less regard unto my soul, than had once a poor honest man of the country called Cumpny. And with this he told me a tale, which I ween I can scant tell you again, because it hangeth upon some turns and ceremonies of the law. But as far as I can call it to mind, it was this. There is a court belonging to every fair, to do justice in such things as happen within the same. This court had a pretty fond name, but I cannot happen on it; but it beginneth with a pie, and the remnant goeth much like the name of a knight that I have known, I wis, and you too, I trow, for he hath been at my father's oft, at such time as you were there, a meetly tall black man; his name was Sir William Pounder.* Now the matter was this. Upon a time, at such a court holden in Bartholemew fair, there was an escheator of London that had arrested a man that was outlawed, and had seized his goods, that he had brought into the fair, tolling him out of the fair by a train. The man that was arrested, and his goods seized, was a northern man; who by his friends caused the escheator to be arrested in the fair, upon some action, I wot not what, and so was he brought before the judge of the court of pie Sir William Pounder. At last the matter came to a cer-

* Margaret has a droll and very roundabout way in getting at the court of *Pie Pounder*. Who does not recognise in Margaret's manner and character, a true *chip of the old block*?

tain ceremony to be tried by a quest of twelve men, a jury, as I remember they call it, or else a perjury. Now had the northern man, by friendship of the officers, found means to have almost all the quest made of northern men, such as had their booths there standing in the fair. Now in the afternoon, the twelve men having heard both the parties and their counsel tell their tales at the bar, were from the bar had into a place to talk in common and agree upon this sentence. Nay, let me speak better in my terms yet, I trow the judge giveth the sentence, and the quest's tale is called a verdict. They were scant come together, when the northern men were agreed to cast our London escheator. They thought there needed no more to prove that he did wrong, than even the name of his bare office alone. But then, as the devil would have it, there was among them an honest man of another quarter, who was called Cumpany. And because the fellow seemed but a poor soul, that sat still and said nothing, they made no reckoning of him, but said: 'Well, we be agreed now; come let us go give our verdict.' Then when the poor fellow saw that they made such haste, and his mind nothing gave him the way that these did, he prayed them to tarry and talk over the matter, and tell him such reasons therein that he might think as they did; that when he so should do, he would be glad to say with them, or else he said they must pardon him; for since he had a soul of his own to save, as they had, he must say as he thought for his, as they must for theirs. When they heard this, they were half angry with him. 'What! good fellow,' quoth one of the northern men, 'whence *wonnest thou* [what wouldst thou be about]? Be not we eleven here, and thou but one, and all we agreed? Wherefore shouldst thou stick? What is thy name, good fellow?'—'Masters,' quoth he, 'my name is Cumpany.'—'Company!' quoth they; 'now by thy troth, play then the good companion, come forth with us

and pass *for good company*.'—'Would to God, good masters,' quoth the man again, 'that there lay no more weight thereon. But now, when we shall hence and come before God, and that he shall send you to Heaven for doing according to your conscience, and me to the devil for doing against mine, in passing here at your request for good company. Now tell me, master Dickonson (that was one of the northern men's names), if I were to say to you, and all of you, masters, I went once for good company with you; which is the cause that I now go to hell; now play you the good-fellows with me, and as I then went for good company with you, so do you come now for good company with me. Would ye go, master Dickonson? Nay, nay, by our lady, never a one of you. And therefore must ye pardon me for passing as you pass. The passing of my soul to Heaven passeth all good company.'"

And when my father had told me this tale, he said: "I prithee now, good Margaret, tell me this; wouldst thou wish thy poor father, being at least somewhat learned, less to regard the peril of his soul, than did that honest unlearned man? I meddle not, you wot well, with the conscience of any man that hath sworn; nor do I take upon me to be their judge. Now, if I were in like case with the good man Cumpany, and were so to reason with such and such a lord, yea, and with such and such a bishop too, as I love best: by my truth, Margaret, I may say to thee in secret here between us twain, (but let it go no farther I beseech thee heartily), I find the friendship of this wretched world so fickle, that for anything I could pray, not one among them all, I wean, would go to the devil with me for fellowship's sake. Then, by Heaven, Margaret, if there were twice as many more of them than there be, I must first have respect to mine own soul."—"Surely, father, without any scruple at all, you may be bold, I dare say, to swear that. But, father, they that think you

should not refuse to swear the thing, that you see so many good men and learned swear before you, meant not that you should swear to bear them fellowship, nor to pass with them for good company; but that the credence that you may, with reason, give to their persons for the aforesaid qualities, should well move you to think the oath such of itself, that every man may well swear thereto without peril of his soul, if his own private conscience to the contrary be not the *let* [hindrance]; and that ye well ought, and have good cause to change your own conscience, by conforming it to the conscience of so many others, being such as you know they be. And since it is also by a law made by the parliament, commanded, they think that you be, upon the peril of your soul, bound to change and reform your conscience, and conform it to other men's."—"Marry! Margaret," quoth my father again, "for the part that you play, you play it not much amiss. But, Margaret, first as for the law of the land, though every man born and inhabiting therein, is bound to the keeping it, in every case, upon some temporal pain, and in many cases upon pain of God's displeasure too, yet is there no man bound to swear that every law is well made, nor bound upon the pain of God's displeasure to perform any such point of the law, as were indeed unlawful. Of which kind, that there may such happen to be made in any part of Christendom, I suppose no man doubteth, the general council of the whole body of Christendom, evermore in that point except. But, as after the determination of a well assembled general council, every man is bound to give credence that way, and to conform his own opinion to the determination of the council generally, and then all they that held the contrary before, were for that holding out of blame; so, if before such decision, a man had, against his own conscience, sworn to maintain and defend the other side, he had not failed to offend God very sore. But,

marry! if, on the other side, a man would in a matter take away by himself, upon his own mind alone, or with some few, or with never so many, against an evident truth, appearing by the common faith of Christendom, this conscience is very damnable. Yea, even if it be not so fully plain and evident, yet if he see himself, with far the greater part, think one way against far the greater part of as well learned and as good men, as those are that affirm the thing that he thinketh, thinking and affirming the contrary, and that such folks as he had no reasonable cause to doubt, this is, in truth, a good occasion to move him, and yet not to compel him to conform his mind and conscience to theirs. But, Margaret, for what causes I refuse the oath, that thing, as I have often told you, I will never show you, neither you nor any body else, except the king's highness should like to command me; which, if his grace did, I have before told you how obediently I should. But, surely, daughter, I have refused it, and do, for more causes than one; and for what cause soever I refuse it, this am I sure—that it is well known, that of those who have sworn it, and they too the best learned, before the oath given them said and plainly affirmed the contrary of some such things as they have now sworn in the oath, and that, upon their truth and their learning, and not in haste nor suddenly, but after great diligence done to find out the truth.”—“That might be, father,” quoth I, “and yet since then they may have seen more.”—“I will not,” quoth he, “dispute, daughter Margaret, against that, nor misjudge any other man's conscience which lieth in their own breast, far out of my sight. But this will I say, that I myself never heard the cause of their change, by any new further thing found of authority, than as far as I perceive, they had looked on, and as I suppose, very well weighed before. Now, if of the self same things that they saw before, some seem otherwise unto them now than they did before, I am for their sake the gladder a great deal.

But, as for any thing that ever I saw before, at this day it seems to me as it did before. Yet, though *they* may do otherwise than once they might, yet, daughter, I may not. As for such things as some men would haply say, that I might with reason the less regard their change, considering that the keeping of the prince's pleasure, and the avoiding of his indignation, the fear of their losing of their worldly substance, and of the discomfiture of their kindred and friends might haply make some men either swear otherwise than they think, or frame their conscience afresh to think otherwise than they thought, any such opinion as this will I not conceive of them. I have better hope of their goodness, than to think of them so. For had such things turned them, the same things had been likely to affect me: for, in faith, I know few so faint-hearted as myself. Therefore will I, Margaret, think no worse of other folks in the thing that I know not, than of that I find in myself. But as I know well that mine own conscience causeth me to refuse the oath, so will I trust in God, that, according to their conscience, they have received and sworn it. But whereás, ye think, Margaret, that there are so many more on the other side, than on the side that think in this thing as I think, surely, for your own comfort, must I disabuse you of that thought, which maketh you conclude that your father casteth himself away like a fool, jeoparding the loss of his substance, and peradventure his body too, without any cause why he so should, for peril of his soul, but rather his soul in peril thereby too; to this shall I say to thee, Margaret, that in some of my reasons, I nothing doubt at all, that though not in this realm, yet in Christendom, those well-learned and virtuous men still living, who are of my opinion, are not the fewer part.

“But for the conclusion, daughter Margaret, of all this matter. I tell you again, as I have often told you, that I take not upon me to define or dispute in

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these matters, nor do I rebuke or repugn any other man's deed; nor have I ever written, nor so much as spoken in any company any word of reproach regarding any thing that the parliament had passed, nor meddled I with the conscience of any man, that either thinketh or saith he thinketh contrary unto mine. But as concerning mine own self, for thy comfort shall I say to thee, daughter, that my own conscience in this matter is such as may well stand with mine own salvation; thereof am I, Meg, as sure as there is a God in heaven. And, therefore, as for all the rest—goods, lands, and life itself (if the chance should so fortune,) since this conscience is sure for me, I verily trust in God, that he shall rather strengthen me to bear the loss, than against this conscience to swear, and put my soul in peril. When he saw me sit at this very sad—as I promise you, sister, my heart was full heavy for the peril of his person, for in faith, I fear not for his soul—he smiled upon me, and said: Why, how now, daughter Margaret? how now, mother Eve, where is your mind now? Sit you not musing with some serpent in your breast upon some new persuasion, to offer Father Adam the apple once again?—In good faith, father, quoth I, I can no farther go. I am, as I trow Cresside saith in Chaucer, comen to Dulcarno, even at my wit's end. For since the example of so many wise men cannot in this matter move you, I see not what more to say; except I should look to persuade you with the reasoning that Master Harry Paterson made. For he met one of our men one day, and when he had asked where you were, and heard that you were in the Tower still, he waxed even angry with you, and said: Why? what aileth him that he will not swear? Wherefore should *he* stick to swear—I have sworn the oath? And so, father, I can, in faith go no farther, not even if after the many wise men whom ye take for no sample, I should say with Master Harry, why should you refuse to swear, father, for I have sworn myself? At this

he laughed and said: 'That word was like Eve too' for she offered Adam no worse fruit than she had eaten herself.—But yet, father, quoth I, I fear me very sore, that this matter will bring you into marvellous heavy trouble. You well know, as I showed you, that Master Secretary sent you word, as your very friend, to remember that the Parliament lasteth yet.—Margaret, quoth my father, I thank him right heartily. But I must show you again, that I left not this unthought on. And albeit, I know well, that if they were to make a law to do me any harm, that law could never be lawful. But God shall, I trust, keep me in that grace, that, concerning my duty to my prince, no man shall do me harm, except he do me wrong. And then, as I told you, (this is like a riddle) that there is a case in which a man may lose his head, and have no harm.

“And notwithstanding also, I have good hope, that God shall never suffer so good and wise a prince, in such way to requite the long service of his true faithful servant; yet, since there is nothing impossible to fall, I forget not in this matter the counsel of Christ in the gospel, that ere I should begin to build this castle, for the safeguard of mine own soul, I should sit and reckon, what the charge should be. I counted, Margaret, full surely many a restless night, while my wife slept, and weighed, ere I slept, what peril might befall me: so far forth, that I am sure there came no care above mine. And in devising thereupon, daughter, I had a full heavy heart. But, yet, I thank our Lord, that, for all that, I never thought to change, though the very uttermost should happen to me that my fears run upon.

“No, father, quoth I, it is not like to think upon a thing that may be, and to see a thing that shall be, as ye should (our Lord save you!) if the chance should so fortune. And then should you, peradventure, think, what you think not now, and yet then, peradventure, it would be too late.—Too late, Mar-

garet! quoth my father; I beseech our Lord, that, if ever I make such a charge, it may be too late indeed. For well I wot the change cannot be good for my soul; that change, I say, that should grow by fear.

“And, therefore, I pray God, that, in this world, I may never have good of such change. For as much as I take harm here, I shall at least have the less thereof when I am hence. And if it so were, that I wist well now that I should faint and fall, and, through fear, swear hereafter, yet would I wish to take harm by the refusing first, for so should I have the better hope for grace to rise again. And albeit, Margaret, that I wot well my lewdness hath been such, that I know myself well worthy that God should let me slip: yet can I not but trust in his merciful goodness, that, as his grace hath strengthened me hitherto, and made me content in my heart, to lose goods, lands, and life too, rather than to swear against my conscience, and hath also put in the king towards me that good and gracious mind, that, as yet, he hath taken from me nothing but my liberty; and herein, so help me God, his Highness hath done me so great good by the spiritual profit that, I trust, I take thereby, that among all his great benefits heaped upon me so thick, I reckon upon my imprisonment even as the very chief. I cannot, I say, therefore, mistrust the grace of God, but that either he shall preserve and keep the king in that gracious mind still to do me no hurt, or else, if his pleasure be, that, for mine other sins, I shall suffer in such a cause as I shall not deserve, his grace shall give me strength to take it patiently, and peradventure, somewhat gladly too, whereby his High Goodness shall, through the merits of his bitter passion, make it serve for a release of the pain in purgatory, and over that for increase of some reward in heaven. Mistrust him, Meg, will I not, though I should feel me faint. Yea, and though I should feel my fear even at

point to overthrow me too, yet shall I remember how St. Peter with a blast of wind began to sink for his faint faith, and shall do as he did, call upon Christ, and pray him to help. And, then, I trust, he shall set his holy hand upon me, and in the stormy seas hold me up from drowning. Yea, and if he suffer me to play St. Peter farther, and to fall to the ground, and swear and forswear him too (which our Lord of his tender passion keep me from, and let me lose if it so fall, and never win thereby!) yet after shall I trust that his goodness will cast upon me a tender and piteous eye, as he did upon the fallen apostle, and make me stand up again and confess the truth of my conscience afresh, and abide the shame and the harm of my fault here. And finally, Margaret, this wot I very well, that without my fault he will not let me be lost. I shall, therefore, with good hope commit myself wholly to him. And if he suffer me for my faults to perish, yet shall I then serve for a praise of his justice. But in good faith, Meg, I trust that his tender pity shall keep my poor soul safe, and make me commend his mercy. And, therefore, mine own good daughter, never trouble thy mind for any thing that shall happen to me in this world. Nothing can come but what God will; and I make me very sure, whatsoever that be, in sight seem it never so bad, it shall indeed be the best. And with this, my good child, I pray you heartily, be you, and all your sisters, and my sons too, comfortable and serviceable to your good mother, my wife. And of your good husbands' minds I have no manner of doubt. Commend me to them all, and to my good daughter Alington, and to all my other friends, sisters, nieces, nephews, and all; and unto all our servants, man, woman, and child, and to all my good neighbours, and our acquaintance abroad. And I right heartily pray both you and them to serve God, and be merry and rejoice in him. And if anything happen to me, that you would be loath,

pray to God for me, but trouble not yourself. Pray for me as heartily as I shall pray for all of us, that we may meet together once in Heaven, where we shall make merry for ever, and never have trouble more.

Your sister,

MARGARET ROPER.*

Every attempt to humble and subdue the spirit of the ex-chancellor having proved ineffectual, recourse was had to an expedient for overcoming his constancy, which was calculated to touch him in the most sensible part,—he was debarred from hearing Mass, from access to his spiritual director, and from other consolations of religion. At the same time, as we learn from one of Margaret's letters, "he was wholly deprived of the company of my good mother and his poor children." To Margaret almost freedom of access appears to have been granted, in the treacherous hope that her intercourse with a father over whom she held so much influence, would tend to soften him into compliance with the royal wish.

That some little things that passed in the interviews between More and his daughter transpired, probably by means of the warden of the prison, is clear from the following passages in Cresacre. "Now, whereas the oath of the Supremacy and Marriage was comprised in few words, in the first statute, the lord chancellor and our secretary did, of their own heads, add more words to it, to make it seem more plausible; and this oath, so amplified, they had exhibited to Sir Thomas and others. Respecting this deed of theirs, Sir Thomas said to his daughter: 'I may tell thee, Meg, that they who

* It is strange that not one of More's biographers should have noticed the above highly characteristic letters, and more particularly the latter, exhibiting as it does so affecting a picture of the fond parent and his affectionate child. No where have been portrayed in such lively colours the unbending firmness of More, and the foreboding fears of poor Margaret for that which was so shortly to be realized.

have committed me hither, for refusing an oath, not agreeable to their own statute, are not able by their own law to justify my imprisonment. Pity it is, that any Christian prince should be drawn to follow his affections and flexible counsel, and by a weak clergy, lacking grace; for want of which they stand weakly to their learning, and so shamefully self-abuse themselves." Which words *coming to the council's ears*, they, espying their oversight, caused another statute to be enacted, with all these conditions.*

We shall see by the interrogatories hereafter put to Sir Thomas, that he had found means "by diverse scrolls or letters" to communicate with his old and venerated friend, Bishop Fisher. This being discovered, did not fail to excite the jealous suspicions of his enemies, though, upon inquiry, it was ascertained that "the most papers contained nothing else but comforting words from either to the other, and declaration of the state they were in, in their bodies, and giving of thanks for such meat and drink as the one had sent to the other."

Another fellow-prisoner of his was Dr. Nicholas Wilson, relative to whom we learn from More, that "he had written his highness a book of that matter [the divorce] from Paris." We have two letters of More addressed to him in the Tower. He had been sent there for the same reason as More, but, wanting either his fortitude or his conviction, at length took the oath. It appears he had contrived to get a letter conveyed to Sir Thomas, asking his advice in his doubts. We have More's answer, written

* "In the session which began on the 3d of November [1534] an act was passed [26 H. VIII. c. 2.] which ratifies and *professes* to recite the form of oath promulgated on the day of the prorogation, and enacts that the oath above recited shall be *reputed to be the very oath* intended by the former act of succession, though there were in fact some substantial and important interpolations in the latter acts, such as the words 'most dear and entirely beloved, *lawful wife*, Queen Anne,' which tended to render that form still less acceptable than before to the scrupulous consciences of Fisher and More."—Sir J. Mackintosh.

with all his usual caution on this matter, and with all his usual benevolence. "Good master Wilson," says he, "I am very sorry to see you, besides the trouble that you be in by this imprisonment, with loss of your livelihood and of the comfort of your friends' company, fallen into such agony and vexation of mind, through doubts that trouble your conscience, to your great heaviness of mind. And so much am I for you, good master doctor, the more sorry, as it lieth not in me to give you such 'kind of comfort as you look for at my hand. As touching the oath, the causes for which I refused it no man wotteth what they be. For they be secret in my own conscience, some other, peradventure, than those that other men would ween, and such as I never disclosed to any man yet, nor ever intend to do while I live. Finally as I said unto you, before the oath was offered unto us, when we met in London at adventure, I would be no partaker in the matter. I follow mine own conscience, for which myself must make answer unto God, and leave every other man to his own.* I find in my own life matter enough to think upon. I have lived, methinks, long enough, nor do I look to live much longer. I have since I came in the Tower, looked once or twice to have given up the ghost; and, in good faith, my heart waxed the lighter with the hope thereof. Yet forget I not that I have a long reckoning to give an account of. But I put my trust in God, and in the merits of his bitter passion, and I beseech Him to give me the mind to long to be out of this world and to be with Him. I beseech Him to set your heart at rest, as may be his pleasure and for the weal of your soul. I trust also it may be his pleasure to incline the king's noble mind to be gracious and favourable to you and me both, since we are both of a true mind to him. And if the pleasure of God be of either of us other-

* In another letter to Dr. Wilson he enlarges upon this subject.—
See APPENDIX, No. 5.

wise to dispose, I need give you no advice. But for myself, I most humbly beseech the God of mercy and of all consolation to give me grace to conform my mind to his high pleasure, that after the troublous storm of this my tempestuous time, his mercy may conduct me into the calm sure haven of His bliss, and, of his further pleasure, all my enemies too, if I have any. For our Lod's sake, good master Wilson, pray for me, for I pray for you daily. Comfort yourself by remembering God's great mercy, and the king's accustomed goodness. And, by my troth, I think that all his grace's council favour you in their hearts. I pray you pardon my scribbling, for, of all things, I cannot endure to write as I did sometime." He concludes with a hint in Latin, needful within the walls which held him and his friend, to "send him this rude billet again, *quia quanquam nihil inest mali, tamen prope tertium ministrum nolim rescire*, (because though it contains nothing of evil, I am unwilling it should come into the hands of a third person.)"

When More afterwards learned that the doctor had taken the oath, he wrote him the following note, which does honour to his head and his heart.

MY GOOD DOCTOR,—Our Lord be your comfort. And whereas I perceive by sundry means that you have promised to swear the oath, I beseech our Lord give you the air of good luck. I never gave any man counsel to the contrary in my days, nor ever used any ways to put my scruple in other folks' conscience concerning the matter. And whereas I perceive that you would gladly know what I intend to do, you wot well, that I told you when we were both abroad, that I would therein neither know your mind, nor any man's else; nor you, nor any man else should know mine. For I would be no partaker therein with any man, but leaving every man to his own conscience, I will with God's grace follow my own. To swear against my conscience, were

to the peril of my soul; and to swear what my mind shall be to-morrow, I cannot, not being sure, for whether I shall finally have the grace to do according to my conscience hangeth in God's goodness and not in mine, to whom I beseech you heartily to remember me in your devout prayers, and I shall, and daily do remember you in mine, such as they be. And so long as my poor short life shall last, any thing that I have, your part shall be therein."

In the meantime, various attempts still continued to be made to cajole More into compliance with the royal wish. Crumwell had several interviews with him, in one of which he assured him that the king was still his good master, and did not wish to press his conscience. "The lords commissioners," we quote Sir J. Mackintosh, "went twice to the Tower to tender the oath to him. But neither he nor Fisher would advance farther than their original declaration of perfect willingness to maintain the settlement of the crown, which, being a matter purely political, was within the undisputed competence of parliament. They refused to include in their oath any other matter on account of scruples of conscience, which they forbore to particularise, lest they might thereby furnish their enemies with a pretext for representing their defence as a new crime. As to their real ground, which was, that it would be insincere in them to declare upon oath, that they believed the king's marriage with Anne to be lawful; they might, by the statement of that ground in defending themselves against a charge of misprision of treason, have incurred the penalties of high treason."

The first of these visits of the lords commissioners is thus described by More in a letter to his daughter Margaret:—

Our Lord bless you:—My dearly beloved daughter, I doubt not but by reason of the king's councillors resorting hither in this time in which (our Lord be

their comfort) these fathers of the Charter-house, and master Reynolds of Zion be now judged to death for treason (whose matters and cause I know not), may happen to put you in trouble and fear of mind concerning me being here prisoner, especially for that it is not unlikely that you have heard that I was brought before the council here myself, I have thought it necessary to advertise you of the very truth, to think that you should neither conceive more hope than the matter giveth, lest upon another turn it might aggrieve your heaviness: nor more grief and fear than the matter giveth on the other side. Wherefore shortly ye shall understand that on Friday the last day of April in the afternoon, master lieutenant came here unto me, and showed me that master secretary would speak with me, whereupon I shifted my gown, and went out with master lieutenant into the gallery to him, where I met many, some known, and some unknown in the way. And in conclusion coming into the chamber where his mastership sat with master attorney, master solicitor, master Beydl, and master doctor Tregonwell, I was offered to sit down with them, which in no wise I would. Whereupon master secretary showed unto me that he doubted not but that I had by such friends as hither had resorted to me, seeing the new statutes made at the last sitting of the parliament. Whereunto I answered; yea verily. Howbeit, as there was little need for me to bestow much time upon them, I therefore redelivered the book shortly, and the effect of the statutes I never marked, nor studied to put in remembrance. Then he asked me whether I had not read the *first* statute of them, of the king being head of the church. Whereunto I answered, yes. Then his mastership declared unto me, that, since it was by act of parliament ordained, that his highness and his heirs be, and ever of right have been, and perpetually should be, supreme head of the church of England under Christ, the king's

pleasure was, that those of his council there assembled should demand my opinion, and what my mind was therein. Whereunto I answered, that, in good faith, I had well trusted that the king's highness would never have commanded any such question to be demanded of me, considering that I ever from the beginning, well and truly from time to time declared my mind unto his highness: and, since that time (I said), unto your mastership, master secretary, also, both by my mouth and by writing. And now I have in good faith discharged my mind of all such matters, and neither will dispute kings' titles nor pope; but that the king's true faithful subject I am, and will be, and daily I pray for him, and all his, and for you all that are of his honourable council, and for all the realm. And otherwise than this, I never intend to meddle. Whereupon master secretary answered, that he thought this manner of answer should not satisfy nor content the king's highness. but that his grace would exact a more full answer. And his mastership added thereunto, that the king's highness was a prince, not of rigour, but of mercy and pity. And though he had found obstinacy at some time in any of his subjects, yet when he should find them at any other time conformable and submit themselves, his grace would show mercy: and that concerning myself, his highness would be glad to see me take such comfortable ways, as I might be abroad in the world again among other men, as I have been before. Whereunto I shortly (after the inward affection of my mind) answered for a very truth, that I would never meddle with the world again, to have the world given me. And to the remnant of the matter, I answered in effect as before, showing that I had fully determined with myself, neither to study nor meddle with any matter of this world, but that my whole study should be upon the passion of Christ, and mine own passage out of this world. Upon this I was commanded to go forth for a while, and after

was called in again. At which time master secretary said unto me, that, though I were a prisoner condemned to perpetual prison, yet I was not thereby discharged of mine obedience and allegiance unto the king's highness. And thereupon he demanded of me, whether I thought that the king's grace might not exact of me such things as are contained in the statutes, and upon like pains as he might upon other men. Whereto I answered that I would not say the contrary. Whereunto he said, that likewise as the king's highness would be gracious to them that he found conformable, so his grace would follow the course of his laws toward such as he shall find obstinate. And his mastership said farther, that my demeanour in that matter was a thing, that, of likelihood, made others so stiff therein as they be. Whereto I answered, that I gave no man occasion to hold any point one or other, nor ever gave any man advice or council therein, one way or other. And for conclusion, I could no farther go, whatsoever pain should come thereof. I am (quoth I) the king's true faithful subject and daily beadsman, and pray for his highness and all his and all the realm. I do nobody harm, I say no harm, I think no harm, but wish every body good. And if this be not enough to keep a man alive, in good faith I long not to live. Indeed I am dying already, and have, since I came here, been diverse times in the case that I thought to die within one hour. And I thank our Lord, I was never sorry for it, but rather sorry when I saw the pain past. And therefore my poor body is at the king's pleasure. Would to God my death might do him good! After this master secretary said, Well, we find no fault in that statute: find you any in any of the other statutes after? Whereto I answered, sir, whatsoever thing should seem to me other than good, in any of the other statutes, or in that statute either, I would not declare what fault I found, nor speak thereof. Whereunto

his mastership said full gently, that of anything that I had spoken there should no advantage be taken. And whether he said farther that there was none to be taken, I am not well remembered. But he said that report should be made unto the king's highness, and his gracious pleasure known. Whereupon I was delivered again to master lieutenant, who was then called in. And so was I by master lieutenant brought again into my chamber. And here am I yet in such case as I was, neither better nor worse. That which shall follow lieth in the hand of God, whom I beseech to put in the king's grace's mind, that thing that may be to his high pleasure, and in mine, to mind only the weal of my soul, with little regard of my body, and you with all yours, and my wife and all my children, and all our friends, both bodily and ghostly heartily well to fare. And I pray you, and all them pray for me, and take no thought whatsoever shall happen me. For I verily trust in the goodness of God, that, seem it never so evil to this world, it shall in another world be for the best.

You loving Father,
THOMAS MORE, KNIGHT.

Margaret is ever the faithful depository of her father's counsels; and he finds an opportunity of transmitting her a minute account of his second visit from the commissioners, who had been sent on the same hopeless errand as before.

Our Lord bless you and all yours:—Forasmuch (dearly beloved daughter) as it is likely that you either have heard, or shortly shall hear, that the counsel were here this day, and that I was before them, I have thought it necessary to send you word how the matter standeth. And verily to be short, I perceive little difference between this time and the last. For as far as I can see, the whole purpose is,

either to drive me to say precisely the one way, or else precisely the other. Here sat my lord of Canterbury, my lord chancellor, my lord of Suffolk, my lord of Wiltshire, and master secretary. And after my coming, master secretary made rehearsal in what wise he had reported unto the king's highness, what had been said by his grace's council to me, and what had been answered by me to them, at mine other being before them here last. Which thing his mastership rehearsed in good faith very well, as I knowledged and confessed, and heartily thanked him therefor. Whereupon he added thereunto, that the king's highness was nothing content nor satisfied with mine answer, but thought that, by my demeanor, I had been occasion of much grudge and harm in the realm, and that I had an obstinate mind and evil towards him, and that my duty was, being his subject (and so he had sent them now in his name upon mine allegiance to command me) to make a plain and a terminate answer, whether I thought the statute lawful or not. And that I should either knowledge and confess it lawful, that his highness should be supreme head of the church of England, or else utter plainly my malignity. Whereto I answered, that I had no malignity, and therefore could none utter. And as to the matter I could none other answer make than I had before made, which answer his mastership had there rehearsed. Very heavy I was that the king's highness should have any such opinion of me. Howbeit if there were one that had informed his highness many evil things of me that were untrue, to which his highness for the time gave credence, I would be very sorry that he would have that opinion of me the space of one day. Howbeit if I were sure that other should come on the morrow, by whom his grace should know the truth of mine innocency, I should in the meanwhile comfort myself with consideration of that. And likewise now, though it be great heaviness to me, that his highness hath such opinion of me for the

while, yet have I no remedy to help it, but only to comfort myself with this consideration, that I know very well that the time shall come when God shall declare my truth toward his grace before him and all the world. And whereas it might happily seem to be but small cause of comfort, because I might take harm here first in the meanwhile, I thanked God that my case was such here in this matter, through the clearness of my own conscience, that though I might have pain, I could not have harm. For a man may in such a case lose his head and have no harm. For I was very sure that I had no corrupt affection, but that I had always from the beginning truly used myself, looking first upon God, and next upon the king, according to the lesson that his highness taught me at my first coming to his noble service, the most virtuous lesson that ever prince taught his servant, whose highness to have of me now such opinion is my great heaviness. But I have no means as I said to help it, but only comfort myself in the meantime with the hope of that joyful day, in which my trouble toward him shall be well known. And in this matter further I could not go, nor other answer thereto could I make. To this it was said by my lord chancellor and master secretary both, that the king might by his laws compel me to make a plain answer thereto, either the one way or the other.

Whereto I answered, that I would not dispute the king's authority, what his highness might do in such a case. But I said that verily, under correction, it seemed to be somewhat hard. For if it so were that my conscience gave me against the statute, (wherein how my conscience giveth me I make no declaration,) then I, nothing doing nor nothing saying against the statute, it was a very hard thing to compel me to say, either precisely with it against my conscience to the loss of my soul, or precisely against it to the destruction of my body. To this master secretary said, that I had ere this

when I was chancellor, examined heretics, and thieves, and other malefactors, and gave me a great praise above my deserving in that behalf. And he said that I then, as he thought, or at least the bishops, did used to examine heretics, whether they believed the pope to be head of the church, and used to compel them to make a precise answer thereto. And why should not then the king, since it is a law made here that his grace is head of the church here, compel men to answer precisely to the law here, as they did then concerning the Pope? I answered and said, that I protested that I intended not to defend my part, or stand in contention. But I said there was a difference between those two cases; because that, at that time, as well here as elsewhere through the corps of Christendom, the Pope's power was recognised for a devout thing: which seemeth not like a thing agreed in this realm, and the contrary taken for truth in other realms. Whereto master secretary answered, that they were all well burned for the denying of that; and there was as good reason to compel them to make precise answer to the one as to the other. Whereto I answered, that, since in this case, a man is not by a law in one realm so bound in his conscience, where there is a law of the whole corps of Christendom to the contrary in matter touching belief, as he is by a law of the whole corps, though there happen to be made in some places a law local to the contrary, the reasonableness or the unreasonableness in binding a man to precise answer, standeth not in the respect or difference between heading and burning, but because of the difference in charge of conscience, the difference standing between heaven and hell. Much was there answered unto this, both by master secretary and my lord chancellor, overlong to rehearse. And in conclusion they offered me an oath, by which I should be sworn to make true answer to such things as should be asked me on the

king's behalf, concerning the king's own person. Whereto I answered, "that, verily, I had proposed never to swear any book-oath more while I lived." Then they said that I was very obstinate if I refused that, for every man doth it in the star chamber and every where. I said that was true : but I had not so little foresight, but that I might well conjecture what should be part of my interrogatories ; and as good it was to refuse them at the first as afterward. Whereto my lord chancellor answered, that he thought it but just that I should see them. And so they were shewed me, and they were but twain : the first, "whether I had seen the statute?" the other "whether I believed it a lawful made statute or not?" Whereupon I refused the oath, and said farther by mouth, that the first I had before confessed : and to the *second* I would make no answer : which was the end of our communication, and I was thereupon sent away. In the communication before, it was marvelled that I stuck so much in my conscience, while at the uttermost I was not sure therein. Whereto I said, that I was very sure that my own conscience, so informed as it is, by such diligence as I have so long taken therein, may stand with miue own salvation. I meddle not with the conscience of them that think otherwise. Every man *sua damno stat aut cadit*. I am no man's judge. It was also said unto me, that if I had as lief be out of the world as in it, as I had there said, why did I not then speak even plain out against the statute? It appeared well I was not content to die, though I said so. Whereto I answered as the truth is, that I have not been a man of such holy living, as I might be bold to offer myself to death, lest God for my presumption might suffer me to fall : and, therefore I put not myself forward but draw back. Howbeit, if God draw me to it himself, then trust I in his great mercy, that he shall not fail to give me grace and strength. In conclusion master secretary said, that he liked me

this day much worse than he did the last time. For then he said he pitied me much, and now he thought I meant not well. But God and I both know, that I mean well, and so I pray God do by me. I pray you be you and mine other good friends of good cheer, whatsoever fall of me, and take no thought for me, but pray for me, as I do and shall for you and all of them.

Your tender loving Father,
THOMAS MORE, KNIGHT.

When in company with his daughter, he cautiously avoided all allusions to the court, but in one of their conversations the name of Anne Boleyn happened to be mentioned. "How say they that she is?" said he. "In faith, father," replied Margaret, "never better, as they report."—"Alas! Meg (quoth he), it pitieth me to think into what misery that poor soul shall come, and that very shortly too."

On another occasion, he was told how Anne delighted the king with her dancing. "Well may it fare with her (quoth he). These sports will end in sorrow. Our heads must pay for this dancing; let hers stand fast, I charge her!"

In speaking of a writer who had produced a work in prison, an old author quaintly remarks; "for many years he had been obliged to seek leisure for his studies, now he had to seek studies for his leisure." This observation applies to Sir Thomas. All the while, says Cresacre, that More was in the Tower, he was not idle, but busied himself in writing spiritual treatises. The first is "A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation," which is supposed to pass between certain Hungarians, who live in constant dread of the Turks overrunning their country. We are informed that under the Turks are figured the heresiarchs of the day, "painting in lively colours both the danger that England stood in of being overwhelmed by heresy, and how good Catholics

should prepare themselves to forfeit liberty, life, and estates, in a word, every thing most dear to man, rather than desert their faith." It is a voluminous effort, consisting of nearly one hundred and forty folio pages, but is diversified by much that is lively, and more that is practically good.

The next fruit of More's prison hours is a "Treatise upon the Passion of Christ, after the order of the four Evangelists." This pious work, though not half finished, also extends to nearly one hundred and forty folio pages. Our good fathers were no niggards in their gifts; they poured forth from their abundance, "measure pressed down, shaken together, and running over into our bosom."

We have also a "Treatise on receiving the BLESSED BODY of our Lord, sacramentally and virtually both," in which there is much of a practical nature, and an unction not common in that age.

His prison writings bear the impress of the place, and breathe a something of the air in which they were composed. Among a hundred instances witness the following. "What should we say of a criminal, who, on the point of being led to the place of execution, should desire his coat of arms to be carved over the prison gate? Even such is their vanity, who endeavour with great industry to leave monuments of their dignity in the prison of the world." We shall have occasion to notice each of the above treatises more particularly in our volume of *Selections*.

It having been discovered that More kept up a communication by writing with bishop Fisher, his daughter Margaret, and others, it was determined to prevent his doing so for the future. For this purpose, Rich, then newly made the king's solicitor, Sir Richard Southwell, and one Palmer, servant to Crumwell, were sent to More to take from him his books, papers, and writing materials.* When they

* Cresacre informs us that this visitation took place at the time he was engaged in writing his *Treatise on the Passion of Christ*; nor does

had packed them all into a bag, Sir Thomas was observed to go about closing the windows of his apartment, and when asked his meaning for so doing; "Oh!" said he, when the wares are gone, and the tools taken away, what is to be done but to shut up shop?"

We quote Sir J. Mackintosh. "Two difficulties occurred in reconciling the destruction of Sir Thomas More with any form or colour of law. The first of them consisted in the circumstance that the naked act of refusing the oath was, even by the late statute, punishable only as a misprision; and though the concealment of treason was never expressly declared to be only a misprision, till the statute to that effect was passed under Philip and Mary, chiefly perhaps occasioned by the case of More, yet it seemed strange thus to prosecute him for the refusal, as an act of treason, after it had been positively made punishable as a misprision by a general statute, and after a special act of attainder for misprision had been passed against him. Both these enactments were, on the supposition of the refusal being indictable for treason, absolutely useless, and such as tended to make More believe that he was safe so long as he remained silent. The second has already been intimated, that he had yet said nothing that could be tortured into a semblance of those acts derogatory from the king's marriage, which had been made treason. To conquer this last difficulty, Sir Robin Rich, the solicitor-general, undertook the infamous task of betraying More into some declaration, which might be pretended to be treasonable, in a confidential conversation, and under pretext of familiar friendship."

Calculation and contrivance were not wanting in effecting it. The moment in which Southwell and Palmer were engaged in packing up the books,

he forget to remark the curious coincidence, that, when the searchers entered the room, he was commenting upon those very words of the Evangelist; *and they laid hands upon him, and held him.*

papers, and writing materials, was that adroitly selected for the perpetration of this outrage against justice and every social law. It was supposed that More, who doated upon his books, would be thrown off his guard, and become communicative in the excitement of the moment, while the persons apparently busily occupied in the packing, could conveniently overhear all that passed, and be brought forward as witnesses to confirm Rich's story. But the equanimity of Sir Thomas foiled his enemies now, as it had so often done before. Instead of the excitement which they had calculated upon, More's ever-ready humour came to his relief. Frightful as the whole of this transaction is, it is perfectly in character with many other acts of Henry's reign, and may easily be accredited to the miserable tools of his power. What was the success of this flagitious attempt, will be seen in the subsequent account of More's trial.

Repeated aggressions tend to shake the firmest virtue, and to awaken in the bosom a sense of vengeance for wrongs received: like the lees in wine, this spirit serves to ripen and improve our virtues, so long as it is kept settled and subdued. From the following Reflections found among his papers, may it not be inferred, that More, in moments when he was sore beset on a point of conscience, upon which, if the expression may be allowed, he peculiarly piqued himself, felt the duty of checking this rebellious tendency of our nature?

Reflections written in the Tower.

"Bear no malice nor ill-will to any man living; for, either the man is good, or naught: if he be good, and I hate him, then am I naught; if he be naught, either he shall amend, and die good, and go to God; or abide naught, and die naught, and so be lost. If he be saved, he shall not fail, if I be saved too, as I trust to be, to love me very heartily, and

I shall then love him likewise. And why, then, should I now hate one, who shall hereafter love me for evermore? and why should I now be an enemy to him, with whom I shall, in time coming, be coupled in eternal friendship?—On the other side, if he shall continue naught and be lost, that is so terrible and eternal a sorrow to him, that I should think myself a cruel wretch, if I did not now rather pity his pain, than malign his person. Should any one say, that we may, with a good conscience, wish an evil man harm, lest he should do harm to such as are innocent and good, I will not now dispute upon that point, for the matter requires to be more considered than I can now conveniently write, having no other pen than a coal. But, verily, thus will I say—that I will give counsel to every good friend of mine, if he be put in such a room as to punish an evil man, who lieth in his charge by reason of his office, at all events, to leave the desire of punishing unto God, and unto such folk as are so grounded in charity and cleave so fast to God, that no secret shrewd cruel affection, under the cloak of just and virtuous zeal, can creep in, and undermine them. But let us that are no better than men of a mean sort ever pray for such merciful amendment in others, as our conscience sheweth us we have need of in ourselves.”—How just and generous the nature, that, in moments so trying, could so readily arrive at conclusions like these!

After the severe and arbitrary visitation we have described, all More's future writings and communications were on such scraps of paper as he had the good fortune to procure, and his writing material was a coal. “The marvel is,” says Rastell, “how in the world, amidst so many hindrances, he could write so much, destitute of books, and other helps, and with nothing but a coal for his pen.” But he adds—and there is beauty and poetry in the thought

—"like the coal that Isaiah of old took from the altar, this at once served to purify and impart a vivifying influence."

Sir Thomas is merry upon this, as upon every other misfortune of his. Speaking of the pleasure and comfort he took in writing to his daughter Margaret, he says in one of his letters, "*a whole peck of coal* would not suffice me to do justice to her goodness."

The dreary season of winter had now set in, a season that falls with redoubled gloom upon the solitude of a prison. More had a happy facility of moralising upon objects the most familiar. Looking out of his prison windows, when the roofs of the buildings were white with snow,—“Ah! Margaret,” said he, “how like to the shortest winter-day is the prosperity of this world!”

Nor yet was he without his hours of gaiety and relaxation. The old poetic spirit, which, for so many years, had appeared to be absorbed by the severer duties of the law, and afterwards by the weighty responsibilities of higher employs, sent forth some short-lived gleams, like the northern corruscations of the season. “Two short Ballads, which Sir Thomas made for his pastime, while he was prisoner in the Tower,” are preserved in Rastell’s edition of his works. We do not strongly vouch for their poetic excellence, but, such as they are, the reader shall have them.

With an elegant poet, who, at a later period, was an inmate of these walls, their author could exclaim :

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet, take
That for a hermitage.—*Lovelace.*

The first of these Ballads is said to be to the tune of “Lewis the lost lover.”

Eye-flattering Fortune! look thou ne'er so fair,
 Or ne'er so pleasantly begin to smile,
 As though thou wouldst my ruin all repair,
 During my life thou shalt not me beguile;
 Trust shall I God to enter in erewhile,
 His haven of havens sure and uniform:—
 After a calm I still expect a storm.*

Second Ballad to the tune of "Davy the Dicer."

Long was I, Lady Luck, your serving-man,
 And now have lost again all that I gat;
 When, therefore I think of you now and then,
 And in my mind remember this and that,
 Ye may not blame me, though I shrew your cat;
 In faith I bless you, and a thousand times,
 For lending me some lelsure to make rhymes.

During one of these days, "there gained admission to him a light-headed courtier, talking of no serious matter, but merely urging him to change his mind." More contrived to disencumber himself of the man's importunities, in his usual whimsical way. "I once again recommend you," said the intruder, "to change your mind."—"Well, I have even done so," said Sir Thomas, as if suddenly recollecting himself. Away posted the courtier to the palace full of this piece of important news, and all anxiety to pour it into the royal ear. Without loss of time, back came a message to Sir Thomas, congratulating him on this happy change in his views, and requesting a further explanation of his intentions. Ridiculous as that explanation was, Sir Thomas was obliged to state in his self defence, that the words he had used merely implied that he had changed his mind relative to being shaved that morning, and that this busy body had misunderstood his meaning. The next time the too officious courtier came into the royal presence, he was *not* received with a smile.

March, 1535.—Early in this month, we find the

* Roper tells us that this was written down with More's usual pencil of coal, on Crumwell's quitting the Tower, after his unsuccessful endeavour talk him into a subscription to the oath.

two following notes addressed by Sir Thomas to his beloved Margaret.

MINE OWN GOOD DAUGHTER:— Our Lord be thanked, I am in good health of body, and in good quiet of mind, and of worldly things I no more desire than I have. I beseech him to make you all merry in the hope of heaven. As to such things as I somewhat longed to talk with you all, concerning the world to come, our Lord put them into your minds, as I trust He doth, and better too by his Holy Spirit. May he bless you and preserve you all.

Written with a coal, by your tender loving father, who in his poor prayers forgetteth none of you all, nor your babes, nor your nurses, nor your husbands, nor your good husbands' shrewd wives, nor your father's shrewd wife neither, nor our other friends. And thus fare ye heartily well for lack of paper,
THOMAS MORE, KNIGHT.

On another slip of paper, Rastell found the following, written also with his coal, and prepared no doubt to be sent by a fitting opportunity.

Our Lord keep me continually true, faithful, and plain; to the contrary whereof, I beseech him heartily, never to suffer me to live. For, as for long life, as I have often told thee, Meg, I neither look for, nor long for, and am well content to go, if God call me hence to-morrow. And I thank our Lord, I know no person living that I would should have one fillip for my sake, of which mind I am more glad than of all the world besides.

Recommend me to your shrewd Will, and mine other good sons, and to John Harris, my friend, and yourself knoweth to whom else; and to shrewd wife above all; and God preserve you all; and make and keep you his servants.
T. M.

May 5th.—Proof was soon given that the late statute was not intended to remain a dead letter. Three leading ecclesiastics, priors of the principal religious orders, John Houghton of the Charterhouse, London, Augustine Webster, of Axeholme, and Robert Lawrence of Belleval, had waited on Crumwell to explain their conscientious objections to the recognition to the king's supremacy. Instead of respecting the confidence which this act of theirs bespoke, and admiring the dignity of their comportment, he *from his own house* committed them to the Tower: and contended at their trial, that such objections, by "depriving the sovereign of the dignity, style, and name of his royal estate," amounted to the crime of high treason. The jury, however, could not bring themselves to view the matter in this light, persuaded that men of such acknowledged learning and virtue could not be guilty of an offence so construable by law. When Crumwell sent to hasten their decision, they demanded another day to deliberate; and though a second message threatened them with the punishment reserved for the prisoners, they refused to return a verdict for the crown. Surprised at obstinacy so unusual, the minister visited them himself, and argued the case with them in private; nor was it before he had called intimidation to the aid of his arguments, that he could extort from their reluctance a verdict of guilty. Five days later, the three priors, together with Reynolds, a monk of the monastery of Sion,* suffered the barbarous sentence of the law at Tyburn.

Margaret was with her father on the morning that these four victims were led from the Tower to the

* The sufferings of these and other Cæthasian monks, are faithfully recorded in Chancey's *Historia aliquot nostri sæculi Martyrum*, published at Mentz in 1550, and illustrated by many rare portraits. Cardinal Pole was well acquainted with Reynolds, and bears the following testimony to his virtue and accomplishments: "He was a man of enlightened piety, and his mind was stored with a knowledge of all the liberal arts, which he had obtained from the best sources."—*Defen. Eccles.* p. 84.

place of execution; and gazed with him on the melancholy spectacle from the windows of his apartment. "Look yonder, Meg," said he; "dost thou not see that those blessed fathers are going as cheerfully to their deaths, as bridegrooms to their marriage. And hereby, mine own good daughter, thou mayst see what a great difference there is between such as have spent the whole of their days in a strict and penitential life, and such as have lived a wretched worldly life, as thy poor father hath done, consuming their time in ease, and in things little conducive to salvation. Considering their long life of penance and mortification, God will not suffer them longer to tarry in this vale of misery, but taketh them speedily hence, to the fruition of his everlasting deity. Whereas, thy silly father, Meg, who, like a wretched caitiff, hath passed the whole course of his life in a worldly and sinful sort, God thinketh him not worthy to come so soon to that eternal felicity, but leaveth him here in the world, to be farther plagued and vexed by its care and turmoil."

Of that "care and turmoil" the closing scene was fast approaching. On the first of June,* 1535, after the defeat of every attempt to practise on his firmness, More was brought to trial. To make the greater impression, he was conducted on foot through the most frequented streets, from the Tower to Westminster Hall. He appeared in a coarse woollen gown: his hair, which had become gray during the course of his imprisonment, his face, which, though cheerful, was pale and emaciated, and the staff with which he supported his feeble steps, announced the length and rigour of his confinement. A general feeling of horror and sympathy ran through the spectators.

* The 6th of May is the day assigned to the trial by Mackintosh, but as both Rastell and Cresacre agree in their statement that about the space of a month intervened between More's trial and execution. Lingard's is the probable date.

To use the language of Sir J. Mackintosh, "it will scarcely be doubted that no such culprit had stood at any European bar for a thousand years. It is rather from caution than from necessity, that the ages of Roman domination are excluded from the comparison. It does not seem that, in any moral respect, Socrates himself could claim a superiority."

Many of the spectators must have been touched by the circumstance of seeing him placed as a prisoner at the bar of that court, in which he had formerly presided as judge with universal applause.

He was tried, probably by special commission, before the following judges :

Chancellor Audley, Chief-justice Fitzjames, Sir John Baldwin, Sir Richard Leicester, Sir John Port, Sir John Spelman, Sir Walter Luke, Sir Anthony Fitzherbert. The jury, (for their names, says Cayley, deserve to be recorded for their infamy) were

Sir Thomas Palmer, Sir Thomas Peirt, George Lovel, Esq., Thomas Burbage, Esq., Geoffery Chamber, Gent., Edward Stockmore, Gent., William Brown, Gent., Jasper Luke, Gent., Thomas Bilington, Gent., John Parnel, Gent., Richard Bellamy, Gent., George Stokes, Gent.

Henry dreaded the effect of More's eloquence and authority: and, therefore, to distract his attention and overpower his memory, the indictment had been framed of enormous length and unexampled exaggeration, multiplying the charges without measure, and clothing each charge with a load of words, beneath which it was difficult to discover the meaning. As soon as it had been read, the chancellor, who was assisted by the Duke of Norfolk, thus addressed the prisoner: "Mr. More, you now see how grievously you have offended his majesty. Yet he is so merciful, that, if you will lay aside your obstinacy and change your opinion, we hope you may obtain pardon of his highness." To this, continues More's

grandson, "the stout champion of Christ replied,—
'Most noble lords, I have great cause to thank your honours for this your courtesy. But I beseech Almighty God, that I may continue in the mind I am in, through his grace, unto death.'"

After this he was suffered to speak in his own defence, and began as follows: "When I think on the length of my accusation, and the heinous matters that are laid to my charge, I have cause to fear lest my memory and wit both, which are greatly decayed, and the bodily weakness which I suffer in consequence of my imprisonment, should not enable me to answer these things on a sudden, in the manner I should wish."

This allusion to his infirmity of body, which was but too evident from the effort with which he supported himself on his staff, had its effect. A chair was ordered him, and having seated himself he thus proceeded:

"There be four divisions, if I mistake not, of this my indictment; to each of which I purpose, God willing, to answer in order. To the FIRST,—that I have been an enemy of stubborn mind, to the king's second marriage: I candidly confess that I always told the king my opinion therein, as my conscience dictated to me. This dictate of my conscience I was neither inclined to conceal from his highness, nor ought I in duty to have done so; and so far am I from thinking myself guilty of treason on this account, that, on the contrary, when asked a question of such moment by my prince, whereupon the quietness of the kingdom depended, had I basely flattered him against my own conscience, and not uttered the truth as I thought, then might I worthily have been accounted a most wicked subject, and a perfidious traitor to God and my king. And if by my honest speech I offended his highness,—if to tell one's mind plainly when one's prince asketh us be an offence, even then I presume that I have been already suffi-

ciently punished for this fault, with most grievous afflictions, loss of my goods, privation of my family, and severe imprisonment, having been shut up already nearly these fifteen months.

“ My SECOND head of accusation is, that I have transgressed the statute made in the last parliament, for that I, when a prisoner, and twice examined by the lords of the council, being of a malignant, perfidious, obstinate, and traitorous mind, did refuse to disclose to them my opinion as to whether the king were supreme head of the church, or not; but that I answered them, that this law, whether just or unjust, affected not me, and more particularly as I enjoyed no benefice from the church. I, however, protested at the time, that I had never said or done anything against it, nor can any word or action of mine be produced to make me culpable. Yea, this I confess was the speech that I then made to their honours—that for the future I wished to think of nothing else but of the bitter passion of our Blessed Saviour, and of my passage out of this miserable world. I wish no harm to any man; and if this will not keep me alive, then have I no desire to live.—I own I made this answer, but surely such words could not transgress any law, or incur any crime of treason; for neither this statute, nor any law in this world can punish a man for holding his peace. Laws can only punish words or deeds: God alone can judge our secret thoughts.”

Here the king's attorney interrupted him, and remarked, that even though they had not one word or deed to object against him, yet that they had his silence, which was an evident sign of a malicious mind; because no dutiful subject, being lawfully asked this question, would refuse to answer it.

“ My silence,” replied More, “ is no sign of any malicious mind in me, as the king can testify by my past dealings; neither can it convict any man of a breach of your laws. It is a maxim among the civilians and

canonists,—*Qui tacet consentire videtur*—who is silent seemeth to consent. As to what you say, that no good subject will refuse to answer directly, verily I am of opinion that it is the duty of such a one, unless he would be a bad Christian, rather to obey God than man; to be more solicitous not to offend his conscience, than of any thing else in the world, especially when his conscience neither causes scandal nor any offence to his prince or country, as is the case with me. For I solemnly affirm, that I never opened this conscience of mine to any mortal living.

“I now come to the THIRD head of my indictment, whereby I am accused, that I maliciously attempted, traitorously endeavoured, and perfidiously practised against the said statute, because, while in the Tower, I wrote eight sundry packets of letters to the Bishop of Rochester, whereby I persuaded him to break the same law, and induced him to the like obstinacy. I earnestly desire that these letters may be produced and read; for they will either acquit me or convict me of falsehood. But since you say that the bishop burnt them all, I will here tell the truth of the whole matter: some were only of private matters as about our old friendship, and acquaintance; one of them was an answer to an inquiry of his, what reply I had made to the commissioners who came to examine me in prison. The only answer I made to this was,—That I had already settled my own conscience: let him settle his to his own liking. As God is my witness, and as I look to Him for the salvation of my soul, this was my only answer. All this I trust is no breach of your law.

“The FOURTH and last crime, alleged against me is, that, when examined in the Tower, I said that this law was like a two-edged sword, for in consenting thereto, I should endanger my soul; in refusing it, I should lose my life. As Bishop Fisher made the like answer, it may, as you affirm, be evidently

gathered that we evidently conspired in this matter. I reply that this answer was but conditional on my part. I said in either case there was danger, whether I approved or disapproved the law: and therefore it was like a two-edged sword, which wielded cutteth both ways; and it seemed a hard thing that it should be extended to myself who had never contradicted it by word or deed. These were *my* words: how the bishop answered I know not. If his answer was like mine, it proceeded not from any conspiracy of ours, but from an analogy arising from our similar minds and pursuits.

“To conclude, I unfeignedly avouch that I never spoke a word against the law to any mortal living; although, perhaps, reports to the contrary may have been made to the king’s most merciful majesty.”

Though no further answer was made to Sir Thomas by the king’s attorney, the word *malice*, says Cresacre, was in the mouth of the whole court, but no man could produce either word or deed to prove it. The evidence, indeed, of any circumstances attendant on the refusal in question, strong enough to aggravate it into an act of treason, must have been felt to be defective; for the prosecutors were reduced to the necessity of examining Rich, the solicitor-general, to prove circumstances of which he could have had no knowledge, without the foulest treachery on his part. Rich had the hardihood to declare, upon oath, that, on occasion of his proceeding, by orders, to the Tower, to take possession of More’s books, papers, &c., and while Sir Richard Southwell and Mr. Palmer were engaged in packing up the same, that he had asked More in the way of familiar conversation, if an act of parliament had made Rich king, More would not acknowledge him. Sir Thomas said, “Yes, sir, that I would.”—“If they declared me pope, would you acknowledge me?”—“In the first case, I have no doubt about temporal governments; but suppose the parliament

should make a law that God should not be God, would you then, Mr. Rich, say that God should not be God?"—"No," says Rich, "no parliament could make such a law." Rich went on to swear, that Sir Thomas More added, "No more could the parliament make the king supreme head of the church." More denied the latter part of Rich's evidence altogether; which is, indeed, inconsistent with the whole tenour of his language.

Roper has preserved the answer of More on this occasion in his very words, as reported to him by credible eye-witnesses. After looking for a moment upon Rich, "with a countenance more in pity than in anger," he turned to the bench, and stretching forth his arm, said in a tone of much earnestness:—"My Lords and Gentlemen, if I were a man who did not regard an oath, I need not, as is well known, stand in this place; nor appear at this time, nor in this case, as an accused person. And if this oath of yours, Mr. Rich, be true, then do I pray *that I may never see God in the face*; which, were it otherwise, I would not say, were it to win the whole world!"

Here More gave the court the true account of his conversation with Rich in the Tower; and feeling warmed by the interests of truth, he seemed, for a moment, to forego the habitual gentleness of his nature, and exposed the profligacy of Rich in words of memorable severity.

"In good faith, Mr. Rich, I am far sorrier for your perjury, than for mine own peril. And this understand—that neither I nor any man else to my knowledge, ever took you to be a man of such credit, that, in any matter of importance, either I, or any other, would at any time vouchsafe to communicate with you. I, as you know, have for no small while been acquainted with you and your conversation, having known you from your youth hitherto, for we long dwelt together in one parish, where, as your-

self can tell—I am sorry you compel me so to say it—you were esteemed very light of your tongue,* a great dicer, and of no commendable fame. And so, in your house at the Temple, where hath been your chief bringing-up, were you likewise accounted.

“Can it, therefore, seem likely to your honourable Lordships,” said More, turning to the bench, for during the latter address he had kept his eye rivetted upon Rich, “can it seem likely that I would, in so weighty a matter, so unadvisedly overshoot myself, as to trust Mr. Rich (a man ever reputed by me of but little truth, as your Lordships have just heard) so far above my sovereign Lord the King, or any of his noble counsellors, that to *him* I would utter the secrets of my conscience touching the king’s supremacy—the especial point and only mark at my hands so long sought for; a thing which I never did, nor ever would, after the statute thereof made, reveal unto the king’s highness himself, or to any of his honourable counsellors, as is not unknown unto your honours, who were at sundry times sent from his own person to the Tower to me for none other purpose. And what I have kept from you, should I have reserved for *him*? Can this, in your judgment, my Lords, seem true, or even likely?”

“And yet, supposing I had so done, my Lords, as Mr. Rich hath sworn, seeing it was spoken but in secret familiar talk, nothing affirming, and only putting of cases, without other unpleasant circumstances, can that justify its being taken as spoken maliciously? But, where there is no malice, there can be no offence. And as to this, I can never think, my Lords, that so many worthy bishops, so many

* The following observation of More will apply here: “Men rarely begin to lie a little, but they end by lying too much: a man’s first lie he can hide in his sleeve, but his last is too great for the largest cloak to cover.”—*Answer to Tindall.*

honourable personages, and so many other worshipful, virtuous, wise, and learned men, as at the making of that law were in parliament assembled, ever meant to have any man punished by death, in whom there could be found no malice—taking *malitia* for *malevolentia*: for if *malitia* be merely taken for *sin*, then there is no man can excuse himself; for if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

“ Besides this, the manifold goodness of the King’s Highness himself, who hath been so many ways my singular good Lord, and who hath so dearly loved and trusted me, vouchsafing to admit me, even at my very first coming into his honourable service, to the dignity of his honourable privy council, and most liberally advancing me to offices of great credit and worship; and, finally, with the weighty *room* [place] of his grace’s high chancellor, next to his own royal person the highest officer in this noble realm, so far above my qualities or merits honouring and exalting me; and for the space of twenty years and more showing me his continual favour; and (until at my own poor suit it pleased his Highness to discharge and disburthen me, giving me power to bestow the residue of my life for providing for my soul) continuing most benignly to heap more and more honours upon me;—surely, all this, I say His highness’ goodness continually extended towards me, were matter sufficient to convict the slanderous surmise by this man so wrongfully imagined against me.”

An address so spirited could not fail to produce its impression. The credit of Rich was so deeply wounded, that he was compelled to call Sir Richard Southwell and Mr. Palmer, who were present at the conversation, to prop his tottering evidence. The dignity of More’s manner, the solemnity of the moment, and the remnant of honesty that had survived the debasement of the courtier, awoke in them a

sense of shame and repentance. They made an awkward excuse to Rich, and left the miscreant in his utmost need.* Palmer said, that "he really was so busy in the thrusting up of Sir Thomas's books into a sack, that he took no heed to their talk."—Southwell declared that, "as he was appointed only to look to the conveying of the books, he gave no heed to what passed." And after this, continues Cresacre, Sir Thomas alleged many other reasons in his own defence, to the utter discredit of Rich's aforesaid evidence, and in proof of the clearness of his own conscience.

But all would not do. The reader who has marked the character of Henry's reign, will already have anticipated the result of the trial—if indeed this mockery of the forms of justice may be dignified by such a name. He need not be told that this prince made his will a rule for judges and jury; that he sported with law and justice, and that his parliament so long followed his caprices with servility, that, by degrees, they, as well as himself, were lost to all sense of shame. Lord Herbert, who has painted this reign in as favourable colours as he was able, tells us that "Henry and his parliament agreed so well in every thing, that it plainly appears by their frequent prorogations, that he had no mind to part with them." These men, the following year, were not ashamed to choose this same Rich for their speaker, and he repaid the compliment by re-echoing their flattery and subserviency to Henry. In his speech addressed to the throne, "he took occasion to praise the king for his wonderful gifts of grace and nature; he compared him for prudence and justice to Solomon; for strength and fortitude to Sampson; and for beauty and comeliness to Absalom." In reply to his

* There is a shrewd observation of More's, that will apply here; "It were ill indeed with the world, if malice had as much wit, circumspection, and forethought in the pursuit of an ungracious purpose, as it hath ill-nature and wilfulness."

confession that he was utterly unfit for that office—possibly the only truth the man ever spoke, the king orders the chancellor to reply, that he *knows* him to have all the necessary qualifications. It is no unequivocal sign of these times, that, instead of being hooted from society, this miscreant was created Lord Rich, and some few years later filled the chancellor's seat! Surely the great Bacon had this fact in view, when he was heard to exclaim:—"If this it is to be a chancellor, I think if the great seal lay upon Hounslow Heath, nobody would pick it up!"

But we digress. The jury speedily returned with a verdict of GUILTY. Cresacre's words are: "they stayed scarce one quarter of an hour, for they knew what the king would have them do in this case." The chancellor, More's immediate successor, was proceeding, as chief commissioner, with no less hasty servility to pronounce judgment upon him, when the knight, in a dignified but courteous manner, observed: "That in *his* time, it was customary in such a case, to ask the prisoner, before judgment, if he had aught to say why judgment should not proceed against him." The rebuke of the ex-chancellor was not unfelt; and Audley, "arresting his sentence, wherein he had already partly proceeded," demanded of Sir Thomas, what he was able to say in this instance to the contrary? and More, according to Roper, spoke as follows:

"Forasmuch, my Lords, as this indictment is grounded upon an act of parliament directly repugnant to the laws of God and of his Holy Church, the supreme government of which, or of any part thereof, no temporal prince may, by any law, presume to take upon him, as rightfully belonging to the see of Rome, as a special prerogative granted by the mouth of Christ himself to St. Peter, and the Bishops of Rome his successors, during the time that our Saviour sojourned here upon earth—it is, therefore, among Catholic Christians insuffi-

cient in law, to charge any Christian man to obey it."

The chancellor here repeated his favourite objection, on which he had laid so much stress in the examinations in the Tower, that, since the bishops, universities, and men the best learned had subscribed to this act, it was wonderful that he alone should oppose them all, and argue so vehemently against it.

"If the number of bishops and universities be so material, as your lordship seems to make it, that very circumstance is a cause why I should make no change in my conscience, for I doubt not that in the number of learned and virtuous in the world, (I speak not of this realm only, but of all Christendom), there are ten to one who are of my mind in this matter. But should I speak of those who are dead and gone, of the learned Doctors and virtuous Fathers, and of the many Saints that are in heaven, sure am I that their number is far greater, and who, all the while they lived, thought in this case as I now think. And therefore, my lord, I think myself not bound to conform my conscience to the council of one realm, against the general consent of all Christendom."

The chancellor "having bethought himself, and being loth to have the whole burthen of the condemnation lie upon himself," asked the opinion of the chief-justice Fitz-James, who, with his self-sufficient air, and backing his words as he usually did with an oath, replied: "My lords all, by St. Gillian! I must needs confess, that, if the act of parliament be not unlawful, then, in my conscience, is the indictment not insufficient." An answer upon which Roper remarks, that it resembled that of the Scribes and Pharisees to Pilate: *If this man were not a malefactor, we would never have delivered him unto you.*

The chancellor then pronounced the savage sen-

tence of the law in cases of treason—hanging, drawing, and quartering.

And now did this champion of upright principles exhibit a trait of character which will be ever memorable. Being, as he had before expressed it, “dead in law,” he felt that he had no longer any measures to keep, and, therefore, with a bold and fearless countenance, he spoke as follows :

“ Well, seeing I am now condemned, God knows how justly, I will freely speak out, for the disburthening of my conscience, and utter my opinion concerning this law. When I perceived that the king’s pleasure was to sift out from whence the pope’s authority was derived, I confess I studied seven years together to find out the truth thereof. But I could not read in any one Doctor’s writings, approved by the church, any one saying that avoucheth that a layman was, or ever could be, head of the church. And, as the city of London could not make a law against an act of parliament which bound the whole realm, neither could this realm make a particular law, incompatible with the general law of Christ’s Universal Catholic Church, Nay, that it was contrary to the unrepealed statutes of the country, for, by Magna Charta, it was declared : *Ecclesia Anglicana libera sit, et habeat omnia jura integra, et libertates suas illasas*—let the English Church be free, and have all its rights entire, and its liberties untouched. In a word, it is contrary to that sacred oath which the king’s highness, and every other Christian prince, has taken with so much solemnity at his coronation. There is no one Doctor’s writings to vouch for all this.”

Here again the chancellor remarked, that the knight arrogated to himself to be more wise, and of more sincere conscience than the whole realm beside. To which Sir Thomas replied, “ I am able to produce against one bishop that you can bring

forth on your side, one hundred for my opinion; and against one realm, the consent of all Christendom for more than a thousand years."

Here the Duke of Norfolk exclaimed: "Now, Sir Thomas, you show yourself to be of an obstinate and malicious mind." "Noble Sir," returned More, "it is no obstinacy or malice that causes me to say this, but the just necessity of the cause, for the discharge of my conscience. God be my witness, that nothing but this hath moved me hereunto."

Here the chief justice informed him, that, in consideration of the high offices he had filled, the king was graciously pleased to commute his sentence to simple decapitation. Solemn as such a moment would have been to ordinary men, this mitigation of punishment afforded the knight a subject for his irrepressible humour. "I thank the King for his kindness: but I pray God to preserve all my friends from favours such as these."

The commissioners once more offered him a favourable hearing, if he had any further matters to propose. "My Lords," said he, "I have no more to say, but that, as the blessed Apostle St. Paul was present and consented to the death of St. Stephen, and held the clothes of those who stoned him to death, and they are both now saints in heaven, and shall continue there friends for ever;—so do I verily trust, and shall, therefore, right heartily pray, that, though your Lordships have now, here on earth, been judges to my condemnation, we may, nevertheless, hereafter meet in heaven merrily together to our everlasting salvation. Once again, God preserve you all, and guard and bless with length of days my sovereign lord the King, and grant him faithful counsellors."*

* "There is an admirable simplicity in the manner in which More conducted his defence, in no part of which is there the slightest approach to theatrical manner, or ostentatious defiance; and, instead of provoking his judges to violence, he seemed by his example willing to teach them the decorum and mildness of the judgment-seat. He used all the just means of defence, which law or fact afforded, as

Roper had attended the trial, and the moment it was concluded, he hastened round to the door by which his father-in-law would be conducted on his way back to the Tower. After waiting a short time, More was brought forth guarded, when Roper, rushing forward through the crowd, threw himself on his knees before the man whom he had already learned to venerate as a martyr, and earnestly begged his blessing. Sir Thomas stopped for a moment to pronounce a benediction upon the petitioner, and then was hurried on to the barge that was waiting to convey him to the Tower. After the exhaustion of the trial, and the heat and suffocation of a crowded court, it was refreshing to breathe the fresh air of the river, and Sir Thomas soon recovered his spirits again, and conversed freely with Sir William Kingston, the constable of the Tower, "his very dear friend." When More saw the tears stealing down his cheeks, he endeavoured to assuage his sorrows by the consolations of religion, and then fell into familiar talk upon the objects of the scene around. Kingston afterwards said to Roper, "Indeed, but I was ashamed of myself when I found my heart so feeble, and his so strong." When they reached the Tower-wharf, More had entirely recovered his usual cheerful tone, and stepped out of the barge with alacrity: but here his feelings were to be put severely to the proof. Scarcely had he set his foot upon the wharf, where the Tower guards were drawn up to receive him, when a person made her way through the assembled throng, arrested the procession, and in an instant clung round his neck. It was his Margaret, his good angel, who had been eagerly watching for his landing, her heart having told her that this would be the last opportunity of

earnestly as if he had expected justice. Throughout his sufferings, he betrayed no need of the base aids from pride and passion, which often bestow counterfeit fortitude on a public death."—*Sir J. Mackintosh.*

"Burnet should have blushed to excuse, by absurd and unworthy sophistry, the punishment of those who refused to swear to the king's supremacy."—*Hallam. Constitu. Hist. I. 30.*

seeing her dear father in this world. No sooner had she caught a glance of him, and saw the axe borne before, with the edge towards him—the certain sign of what was to follow—than she rushed forward, “and without care for herself, passing through the midst of the guard, who with bills and halberts compassed him around, there openly in the sight of them all embraced him, took him about the neck, and kissed him, unable to utter any other word than “Oh my father! Oh my father!” Before the face of his judges, More had stood calm, cheerful, triumphant; but this was an appeal to the tenderest feelings of his heart for which he was little prepared. But, “pleased with her most natural and dear affection toward him, he gave her his fatherly blessing, telling her that God’s holy will must be done; that she knew full well all the secrets of his heart, and that, like him, she must conform to the decrees of heaven and be patient.” They parted. But “scarcely had she gone ten steps, when, not satisfied with the former farewell, like one who had forgotten herself, ravished with the entire love of so worthy a father, she again rushed through the closing guards, hung about his neck, and divers times kissed him.” More’s philosophy was not proof against this second attack; he spoke not a word, but the tears streamed from his eyes.* These sorrows were infectious: “Yea, there were very few in all the crowd, who could refrain from weeping at this sight; no, not the guards themselves.”

In so trying a moment, More realized the full force of that admonition of the Psalmist: *Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and He will support thee!*

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Whom to leave,
Alone is bitter to me; and, in dying,
Go with me, like good angels, to my end.
And, as the long divorce of steel falls on me,
Make of your prayers one sweet sacrifice,
And lift my soul to heaven.

Shakspeare, Henry VIII.

Nor had Margaret come unattended to fulfil this melancholy office of love. She was accompanied by her brother, and by Margaret More's ward, who imitated Mrs. Roper's example, and embraced their father, friend, and protector; as also did Margaret's "faithful maid servant, Dorothy Colley," of whose testimony of affection More afterwards observed, "that it was homely, but very lovingly done."

History has recorded few things so affecting as this last interview between More and his daughter. As we read, and remember the blameless, and even lofty character of their domestic life, the school, the playful and unreserved intercourse of the father and his children, their severer studies, their religious exercises, the truly moral feeling which regulated the employments of every hour, the charity to others, and the perfect union among themselves:—as we recollect all this, we are led to see how far the taking counsel with things impure can stifle in the heart the sense of justice and humanity, and are enabled to estimate the amount of selfishness, insensibility, and crime, chargeable to the monarch who could deprive his people of examples so pure, so generous, so ennobling.*

The publication of the "State Papers" has put us in possession of two interesting documents, from which we learn the important fact, that a fortnight after Sir Thomas's trial and condemnation, he was once more examined, in the Tower, by four civilians, in

* What a noble subject this for the pencil of a Wilkie! More might figure in a picture of that artist, but he will not do in Hurd's Tragedy, Shakspeare has shown more tact. Wolsey and Crumwell figure in his *Henry the Eighth*, but More has no place there. The two former bear in their characters the materials for the tragic muse, but only think of More strutting in the buskin! he who had not a particle of trickery or romance about him, or, as Dr. Johnson has it, "exhibited no sallies or poetical lamentation, no throes of tumultuous misery." It is not too much to say of More, that he reversed the old remark, that "no man is a hero to his valet de chambre." Nothing could be more admirable than the ease with which he wore his greatness. He claimed no less respect in his undress, than when decked in his robes of office, and preceded by his chancellor's mace.

the hope to shake his constancy, and gain him over to the royal pleasure.

“INTERROGATORIES ministered to Sir Thomas More, Knight, the 14th day of June, Anno Regni Regis Henrici Octavi 27^o, within the Tower of London, on the behalf of the King's Highness, before Mr. Bedle, Mr. Doctor Aldridge, Mr. Doctor Layton, Mr. Doctor Curwen, in the presence of Polstede, Whalley, and Rice aforesaid.

1. FIRST, whether he had any communication, reasoning, or consultation with any man or person, since he came to the Tower, touching the Acts of Succession, the Act of Supreme Head, wherein speaking of certain words by the King's Highness is made treason, or no? and if he say, yes; then be he asked when, how oft, with whom, and to what effect?

2. *Item*, whether he received any letters of any man, or consulted any man, or wrote any letters to other men, since he came to the Tower, touching the said acts, or any of them, or any other business or affairs concerning the King's Highness, his succession, or this his realm? and if he say, yes; then be he inquired, how many, of whom, and to whom, when, and what tenor or effect?

3. *Item*, whether the same letters be forthcoming or not? and if he say no; then be he asked, why, and to what intent they were done away, and by whose means?

4. *Item*, whether any man of this realm, or without this realm, did send unto him any letters or message, counselling or exhorting him to continue and persist in the opinion, that he is in? If he say, yes; then be he inquired, how many they were, of whom, and to what effect?

ANSWERS of Sir Thomas More, Knight, made to the above interrogatories.

To the first he answereth, that he never had any communication, or consultation, touching any of the acts or matters specified in this interrogatory, since he came to the Tower, with any person, as he saith.

To the second interrogatory he saith, that since he came to the Tower, he wrote divers scrolls or letters to Mr. Doctor Fisher, and received from him some others again; whereof the most part (as he saith) contained nothing else, but comforting words from either to other, and declaration of the state that they were in, in their bodies, and giving of thanks for such meat or drink, that the one had sent to the other. But he saith, that he remembereth, that upon a quarter of a year, to his remembrance, after the coming of this deponent to the Tower, this respondent wrote a letter to Dr. Fisher, wherein he certified him that this examinant had refused the oath of succession; and never showed the Council, nor intended ever to show any other cause, wherefore he did so refuse the same. And the said Dr. Fisher made him answer by another letter again, wherein he declared what answer he had made to the Council, and remembereth that this was part of the contents thereof: 'how he had not refused to swear to the succession.' And saith, that there went no other letters between them, that any thing touched the King's business, laws, or affairs, till the Council came hither, first of all, to examine this deponent upon the Act of Supreme Head. After which examination, this examinant received a letter from Dr. Fisher, of this effect, *viz.* 'How he was desirous to know of this respondent, what answer he had made to the Council.' And thereupon this respondent answered him by another letter, as thus: 'My Lord, I am determined to meddle of nothing, but only to

give my mind unto God, and the sum of my whole study shall be, to think upon the Passion of Christ, and my passage out of this world, with the dependences thereupon;—or else thus: ‘My Lord, my answer was this, that I was determined to meddle with nothing,’ &c., as above: he cannot well remember, whether of both the said ways he wrote the same letter. Then within a while after, he saith, he received another letter from the said Dr. Fisher, of this effect: ‘That he was informed that there was a word in the statute, [26 Hen. VII. cap. 13.] ‘MALICIOUSLY;’ and if it were so, that he thought thereby, that a man, speaking nothing of malice, did not offend the statute; and desired this respondent to show him, whether he saw aught otherwise in it.’ And this respondent answered him again, by another letter, shortly after, to this effect, *viz.* ‘How this examinant took it to his thinking, as he did; but the understanding or interpretation of the said statute would neither be taken after his mind, nor after this deponent’s mind; and therefore it was not good for any man to trust unto any such thing.’

And saith farther, that other in this last letter, or in another mean letter between this and the first, he wrote never. This examinant confesseth how he had spoken to the Council, that he would meddle with nothing, but would think on the Passion of Christ, and his passage out of the world, and that he had written the same words to Dr. Fisher; and fearing, lest it might happen him to speak the same words, or like, in his answer to the Council, this examinant desired him to make his answer according to his own mind, and to meddle with no such thing as he had written unto him, lest he should give the Council occasion to ween, that there was some confederacy between them both.

Also, saith, that since the last examination of him, this examinant did send Dr. Fisher word, by a letter, that Mr. Solicitor [Rich] had shewed him, that

it was all one not to answer, and to say against the statute what a man would, as all the learned men of England would justify, as he said then; and therefore he said, he could reckon upon nothing else but upon the uttermost: wherefore he prayed him to pray for this examinant, and he would again pray for him.

Also, he saith, that he, considering how it would come to his daughter's ear, Mr. Roper's wife, that the Council had been with him, and should hear things abroad of him thereupon, that might put her to a sudden fright; and fearing lest she, being (as he thought) with child,* should take some harm by that sudden fright, and therefore minding to prepare her before, to take well aworth whatsoever thing should betide of him, better or worse; did send unto her, both after the first examination, and also after the last, letters, by the which he did signify unto her, how that the Council had been to examine him, and had asked him certain questions touching the King's statutes, and that he had answered them, that he would meddle with nothing, but would serve God: and what the end thereof should be, he could not tell; but whatsoever it were, better or worse, he desired her to take it patiently, and take no thought therefore, but only pray for him. And saith, that she had written unto him, before, divers letters, to exhort him and advertise him to accomodate himself to the King's pleasure; and specially, in the last letter, she used great vehemence and obsecration, to persuade this examinant to incline to the King's desire. And other letters, than those before touched, he neither sent, nor received, to or from any person, since he came to the Tower, to his remembrance; and saith that George,

* The circumstance mentioned in the text serves to give an additional interest to the scene on Tower-wharf. Margaret was true to her character, merging the feelings of the mother in the deeper solicitudes of the daughter.

the Lieutenant's servant, did carry the said letters to and fro.

To the third interrogatory he saith, that there is none of the said letters forthcoming, whereof he knoweth; but this examinant would have had George to keep them, and George always said, that there was no better keeper than the fire, and so burned them. And when he saw, that he could not persuade George to keep them, he would have had George to shew them, first to some trusty friend of his, that could read, and if he saw that there were any matter of importance in them, that he should carry the same to the Council, and get the thanks himself, first of any man therefore: and if there were none such matters in them, that he should deliver them where he be directed. Yet the said George feared so (as he always said) his master, the Lieutenant, which had charged him highly that he should meddle with no such matters, lest he would have been extremely displeased with him if he had seen that he had done any thing, were it never of so small importance, against his commandment; and therefore he would needs burn them.

To the fourth interrogatory he answereth, nay.

Examined further, to what intent he did send the said letters to the said Mr. Doctor Fisher? saith, that considering they were both in one prison, and for one cause, he was glad to send unto him, and to hear from him again.

(Signed) J. (*Notarial Mark*) R.

Interrogatories, ministered, on the King's behalf, unto Sir Thomas More, Knight, the day, year, and place above recited, by the Council before-named, and in the presence of the said witnesses; with his answers unto the same.

First, whether he would obey the King's High-

Y

ness, as Supreme Head on earth, immediately under Christ, of the Church of England, and him so repute, take, accept, and recognize, according unto the statute in that behalf made?

To the which interrogatory he saith, that he can make no answer.

Item. Whether he will consent and approve the King's Highness' marriage with the most noble Queen Anne, that now is, to be good and lawful: and affirm that the marriage between the King's said Highness, and the Lady Catharine, Princess Dowager, pretended, was and is unjust and unlawful; or no?

To the same he saith, that he did never speak nor meddle against the same, nor thereunto can make answer.

Item. Where it was objected unto him, that by the said statute, he, being one of the King's subjects, is bound to answer to the said question, and to recognize the King's Highness to be Supreme Head, as is aforesaid, as all other his said subjects are bound to recognize, according unto the said statute.

To the same, he saith, that he can make no answer.

(Signed) J. (*Notarial Mark*) R.
State Papers, Hen. VIII. vol. i. p. 432.*

It is evident that these interrogatories, into which some terms peculiarly objectionable to More were now, for the first time, inserted, were contrived for the sole purpose of reducing the illustrious victim to

* Turner has the singular taste to dislike More, though, to be sure, it is only in the inverse ratio of his love for Henry, and his admiration of his virtues and amiability. He has laboured hard to *guess* at something like a case against the Ex-Chancellor; but it is a very lame attempt. It all results in this:—"It is clear that this refusal [to acknowledge the marriage and the supremacy] did not constitute the high treason of which More was accused, of which he was convicted, and for which he suffered, *whatever they may have been!*" It is to be hoped that the above documents will have the effect of setting Mr. Turner's doubts at rest.

the option of uttering a lie, or of suffering death. The conspirators against him might, perhaps, have a faint idea that they had at length broken his spirit. If he persisted, they hoped that he might be represented as bringing destruction on himself by his own obstinacy.

Such, however, was his calm and well-ordered mind, that he said and did nothing to provoke his fate. Had he given affirmative answers, he would have sworn falsely: he was the martyr of veracity.*

Instead of being moved by these attempts to practise upon his presumed weakness, "he was arming himself by prayer, meditation, and many holy mortifications, for the day of his martyrdom."

Among his memoranda, or points for meditation, we find the following, which show the workings of his spirit in those trying moments:—

"To set my mind fast upon God, and not to hang upon the blasts of men's mouth.

"To be content to be solitary, and rid my mind of all business.

"By little and little, utterly to cast off the world.

"To think my greatest enemies my very best friends.

"To eschew light foolish mirth and gladness, and to cut off all unnecessary recreations."

Some of his occasional ejaculations, as he paced thoughtfully about his prison-chamber, are also left us:—

"Who would save his life to displease his God? If thou so savedst thy life, how deadly wouldst thou

* Servant of God, well done!—well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single has maintain'd,
Against revolted multitudes, the cause
Of truth, and, for Truth's testimony, borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence: for this was all thy care:—
To stand approv'd in sight of God, though worlds
Judg'd thee perverse.

Parad. Lost, B. VI. 29—36.

hate it on the morrow, and feel heavy at heart, that thou hadst not died the day before!

"Cause hast thou none, pardie! to fear that for to-morrow, which thou knowest right well had in a few days fallen.

"If the trouble thou sufferest be according to the will of God, then cheerfully commit thy soul into his hands: He is trusty, and will not deceive thee.

"If thou hast been with Christ at the wine-feast of Galilee, shrink not to stand with him before the judgment-seat of Pilate. The moment approaches that thou shalt rejoice with him in the revelation of his glory."

The following are of a deeper and more impressive cast: they sound the solemn note of preparation for another and a better order of things.

"Give me thy grace, O God, to set the world at nought, and to be gladly thinking of Thee.

"To call upon thee piteously for thy help; to lean upon Thy comforts; and busily to labour to love Thee.

"To humble myself under the mighty hand of God, and to bewail my sins past.

"For the purging of them, patiently to suffer adversity; to be joyful of tribulation. Gladly to bear my purgatory here.

"To walk the narrow way that leadeth to life: to bear the cross with Christ.

"To pray for pardon before the judge come. To have continually in mind the passion that Christ suffered for me. For all his benefits unceasingly to give Him thanks.

"Ever to have the last things in remembrance. To make Death no stranger to me. To have him ever before my eyes, who is ever so near at hand."*

A few days previous to his death, Sir Thomas

* It was no wonder to hear rumour tell
That who so oft had died, once died so well.

Quarles.

wrote, with his usual material of coal, an affectionate letter to Mr. Antonio Bonvisi, a rich Italian merchant of Lucca, who had been for some time a resident in London, and to whose liberality More and his family appear to have been deeply indebted in the season of their distress. We shall shortly have occasion to see that the handsome silk gown in which Sir Thomas intended to appear on the scaffold, was the gift of this worthy man. The letter in question is in Latin; there is something very touching in the kind of postscript appended to Sir Thomas's signature: "Most faithful and best beloved of my friends, and as I used to call you in old times 'pupil of my eye,' fare thee well."

"THOMAS MORE."

"Frustra fecero si adjiciam TUUS, nam hoc jam nescire non potes quam tot beneficiis emeris, nec ego nunc talis sum ut referat *cujus sim*."—It were unnecessary to add THINE, of that you cannot be ignorant, having purchased it by so many benefits; and such am I now, that it is of little consequence *whose* I am.

Monday, July 5th.—On this, the very day before his execution, he wrote the following letter to his beloved Margaret, which breathes the very soul of paternal tenderness:—

MY GOOD DAUGHTER: Our Lord bless you, my good daughter, and your good husband, and your little boy, and all yours, and all my children, and all my god-children, and all our friends. Recommend me when ye may, to my good daughter Cecily, whom I beseech our Lord to comfort. And I send her my blessing, and to all her children, and beg her to pray for me. I send her a handkerchief; and God comfort my good son, her husband. My good daughter Daunce hath the picture in parchment, that you delivered me from my lady Conyers; her name is on the back of it. Shew her that I heartily

pray her, that you may send it in my name to her again, for a token from me to pray for me. I like especially well Dorothy Colly; I pray you be good unto her. I would *wit* [know] whether that be she you wrote me of; if not, yet I pray you be good to the other as you may, in her affliction, and to my good daughter Joan Aleyn too. Give her, I pray you, some kind answer, for she sued hither to me this day, to pray you to be good to her. I cumber you, good Margaret, much, and I should be sorry if it were to be any longer than to-morrow: for it is St. Thomas' even, and the *was* [vigil] of St. Peter; and therefore to-morrow long I to go to God: it were a day very meet and convenient for me.—I never liked your manner towards me better, than when you kissed me last,* for I like when daughterly love and dear charity have no leisure to look to worldly courtesy. Farewell, my dear child, and pray for me, and I shall for you, and for all your friends, that we may merrily meet in heaven. I thank you for your great cost. I send now to my good daughter Clement her algorism stone, and send her and my godson, and all hers, God's blessing and mine. I pray you, at time convenient, recommend me to my good son, John More; I liked well his natural fashion. Our Lord bless him, and his good wife, my loving daughter, to whom I pray him to be good, as he hath great cause; and if the land of mine come to his hand, he break not my will concerning his sister Daunce. And our Lord bless Thomas and Austen, and all that they shall have.

“More got such little pieces of paper,” says

* Here, as below, when speaking of his son, he alludes to the affecting scene on Tower-wharf.

† An algorism stone was a device used for learning arithmetic, something in the nature of the multiplication table. More's protégé, Margaret Gigg, had married Dr. Clement, of whom mention has been made in the early part of this volume.

Cresacre, "as he could obtain by stealth, on which he wrote with a coal. Of these," he adds, "my father left me *the* one which was to his wife, and which he had drawn over with ink: I account it a precious jewel." Well might he set such value on a relic, hallowed by recollections so tender and ennobling, for, in all probability, *the* letter was the one we have just read, traced by More's dying hand.*

From Cresacre we also gather the following interesting particulars. Together with the letter we have just cited, he also sent Margaret his hair-shirt and his discipline, unwilling that they should be found upon his person at the time of his death, "as one that was loth to have the world know that he used such austerity." There is a touching pathos in the observations that follow: "During his whole life-time, he had cunningly contrived, with his mirth and gaiety, to hide from the eyes of others his severe mortifications; and *having now finished the good fight, he sent away the weapons of his spiritual combat.*"

For the reasons assigned in the above letter, it was probably at More's particular request, that the following day was fixed upon for his execution.

Early on the morning of Tuesday, July 6th, (St. Thomas's eve), 1535, More's "singular good friend," Sir Thomas Pope, came to him with a message from the king and council, to say that he was to die before nine o'clock of the same morning, and that he should prepare himself accordingly.

"Mr. Pope," said Sir Thomas, "for your good tidings I heartily thank you. I have always been much bounden to the king's highness for the benefits

* An autograph of Margaret Roper, accompanying a letter in cyphers, is in the possession of the writer of these pages. It was the gift of the descendant of a noble Catholic family, connected by marriage with a branch of that of the illustrious chancellor. Would I could apply to this lady the words of one of More's contemporaries:

Moro vita fides; nam dum manet illa, manebat,
Stante fide, stabat.—*Hen. Holland,*

that, from time to time, he hath most bounteously pressed upon me ; and yet more bounden am I to his grace for putting me here, where I have had convenient time and space to have remembrance of my end. And, so God help me ! most of all, Mr. Pope, am I bounden to his highness, that it pleaseth him so shortly to rid me from the miseries of this wretched world. And therefore will I not fail earnestly to pray for his grace, both here and in the world to come." "The king's pleasure is farther," added Pope, "that, at your execution, you shall not use many words." "Mr. Pope," replied More, "you do well to give me warning of his grace's pleasure ; for otherwise, at that time, I had purposed somewhat to have spoken, but of no matter wherewith his grace, or any, should have had cause to be offended. Nevertheless, whatever I might have intended, I am ready obediently to conform myself to his grace's commands. But this I beseech you, good Mr. Pope, to intercede with his highness, that my daughter Margaret may be at my burial."—"The king is content already," said Pope, "that your wife, and children, and other your friends, shall have liberty to be present thereat."

It was not without reason that Henry accompanied the message of death with a command "not to use many words." He was not ignorant of More's ability as a public speaker, and knew how greatly he was beloved by the people, and more especially by the citizens, among whom he had spent so many years of his life. He was sensible of his injustice to More, and judging of other men's hearts by his own, feared that he should be met by vindictive feelings on the part of the man he was pursuing with outrage and wrong.

Pope now took leave of More, and could not refrain from weeping: "Nay, nay, quiet yourself, good Mr. Pope," said Sir Thomas, "and be not discomfited, for I trust we shall soon see each other

full merrily in heaven, where we shall live and love together in eternal bliss."

"When he was gone," says Cresacre, "Sir Thomas, as one that had been invited to a solemn banquet, changed himself into his best apparel, and put on the silken camlet gown, which his 'entire friend,' Mr. Antonio Bonvisi, had given him since he had been in the Tower. He then knelt down, and betook himself earnestly to his devotions. The following prayer, the very effusion of his gentle spirit, was found among other papers, written with a coal. It is inscribed as 'composed before he was put to death,' and no doubt it was his prayer at this moment."

A DEVOUT PRAYER.



Pater-noster, Ave-Maria, Credo. O Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three equal and co-eternal persons in one Almighty God, have mercy on me, a poor miserable sinner, meekly acknowledging before thy high Majesty, my whole sinful life, even from my childhood hitherto. (*Self-examination.*)

And now, good and gracious Lord, as 'Thou hast given me thy grace to know and acknowledge my sins, so give me thy grace, not in word only, but in contrition of heart, to repent, and utterly forsake them. Forgive me these sins, and those also which my reason, blinded by the senses, cannot discern for sins. Illuminate, good Lord, this heart of mine, and give me thy grace to know and repent all my sins; forgive me such as I have negligently forgotten, and bring them to my mind, with grace purely to confess them before Thee.

Glorious God, give me grace, with little respect to the world, so firmly to set my heart upon Thee, that I may say with the blessed apostle St. Paul, "The world is crucified to me, and I to the world."

To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I long to be dissolved and to be with Christ."

O Almighty Father, teach me to do thy will. Make me to run in the way of thy sweetness. Take me by the right hand, and lead me in the right way for mine enemies' sake ; for I have said, I will restrain my tongue as with a bridle.

O glorious God, all sinful fear, all sinful sorrow and pensiveness, all sinful hope, all sinful mirth and gladness, take from me ; and on the other hand, as to such fear, such sorrow, such heaviness, such comfort, consolation, and gladness, as may be profitable to my soul, "Do unto me, O Lord, according to thy great kindness."

Good Lord, give me the grace, in all my fear and agony, to have recourse to that great fear and wonderful agony, that Thou, my sweet Saviour, hadst on the mount of Olivet, before thy most bitter passion ; and in the meditation thereof, to conceive comfort and consolation profitable to my soul.

Almighty God, take from me all vain-glorious mind, all appetite of praise ; all envy, covetousness, sloth ; all appetite of revenge, all desire or delight of other folks' harm, all pleasure in provoking any to wrath and anger, all delight in exprobaton or insultation against any person in calamity or affliction.

Give me, good Lord, a humble, lowly, quiet, peaceable, patient, charitable, tender, and pitiful heart ; and may all my works, my words, my thoughts, have the taste of thy blessed Spirit.

Give me, good Lord, a full faith, a firm hope, and a fervent charity ; a love to Thee, O good Lord, incomparably above the love to myself, and that I love nothing to thy displeasure, but all things in order to Thee.

Give me, good Lord, a longing to be with Thee, not for the avoiding of the calamities of this wretched world, not for the avoiding the pains of purgatory,

nor even the pains of hell, nor for attaining to the joys of heaven, nor for any interest of mine, but only for the very love of Thee.

And bear me, good Lord, thy love and favour, which my love to thee-ward, were it ever so great, could not deserve. Pardon me, good Lord, that I am so bold to make so high a petition, being so vile and sinful, and so unworthy to attain the lowest. But yet, good Lord, such they be, as I am bounden to wish, and should be nearer the effectual desire of, did not my manifold sins prevent me; from which, O glorious Saviour, vouchsafe of thy goodness to wash me with that blessed blood that issued from thy sacred side, in the diverse torments of thy most bitter passion.

Take from me, good Lord, this lukewarm fashion, or rather this clay-cold manner of meditation, and this dulness of prayer unto Thee. Give me delight, warmth, and quickness in thinking upon Thee; and give me thy grace to long for thine holy sacraments, and especially to rejoice in the presence of thy ever-blessed Body, to thank Thee for thy gracious visitation therewith, and virtually to be participant of the same this day, that I may be made a lively member of thy holy mystical body, the Catholic church.

Almighty God, have mercy on *N.* and *N.*, with especial commemoration of every friend, as goodly affection and occasion require. Almighty God, have mercy on *N.* and *N.*, and on all that bear me evil-will and wish me harm. Their faults and mine together, by such easy, tender, and merciful means, as thine Infinite Wisdom best can devise, vouchsafe to amend and redress, and make us redeemed souls in heaven together, where we may ever love Thee, and live with Thee and thy blessed saints. Grant this, O glorious Trinity, for the bitter passion of our sweet Saviour, Jesus Christ. Give me patience

in tribulation, and grace to conform my will in all things to thine.

The things, good Lord, that I pray for, give me grace to labour for. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep me this day without sin. Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to thy great mercy. Let thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, as we have hoped in Thee. In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted, let me never be confounded!

When the lieutenant of the Tower entered, at the appointed hour, he found him prepared for his coming; but, seeing the handsome silk gown which he had put on, he advised him to take it off again, "for," said he, "he who will get it is a mere *javell* [a worthless fellow]."

"What, Mr. Lieutenant," said the knight, "shall I account him a *javell*, who is to do me this day so singular a service? Nay, were it cloth of gold, I should think it well-bestowed on him, as St. Cyprian did, who gave his executioner thirty pieces of gold." More, however, yielded to the lieutenant's persuasions, "loth, for friendship's sake, to deny him so small a matter [for the prisoner's clothes were his perquisite of office], and so he put on a gown of frieze." Yet, of the little money which was left him, he sent his executioner an angel.*

At the appointed hour of nine, he was conducted from his prison, by the lieutenant of the Tower, to the place of execution, which was on Tower-hill. His grandson thus describes his appearance: "His beard was long, his face pale and emaciated, but his eye had all its former vivacity. He bore in his

* This was a gold coin, of the value of about ten shillings. It is supposed to have received its name from the well-known anecdote of Pope Gregory, *angli* and *angeli*, in reference to the Anglo-Saxon captives.

hands a red cross, and was often seen to cast his eyes toward heaven." On reaching the foot of the scaffold, he surveyed it steadily, and, as it appeared somewhat too slight for the occasion, leaning his hand upon the shoulder of the lieutenant, he said to him with a smile:—"I pray you, Sir, see me safe up; as for my coming down, I may shift for myself."

When on the scaffold, he began a short address to the people, "who were in great troops there to see and hear him," but he was interrupted by the sheriff. Therefore, he briefly desired all the people to pray for him, and to bear witness, that he there died in, and for the faith of, the Holy Catholic Church, a loyal servant both of God and the King. This said, he knelt down, and pronounced, with fervent devotion, the *Miserere* psalm. He then rose cheerfully, and, the executioner coming forward, and asking his forgiveness, More kissed him and said: "Nay, thou wilt do me this day a greater benefit than any other mortal man is able to do. Pluck up thy spirit, man, and be not afraid to do thy office. You see," he added with a smile, "that my neck is but short, take heed, therefore, that thou strike not awry for the saving of thy *honesty* [credit]."

When the executioner would have covered his eyes, he said: "Hold, I will do that myself;" and he did so with a kerchief that he had brought with him for the purpose. He then knelt, and adjusted his neck upon the block; but, after a moment's space, he again raised his head, and removing aside his beard, was heard to say: "That, at least, has committed no treason."

With such alacrity and spiritual joy, adds his grandson, did he receive the fatal blow, which had no sooner severed the head from the body, than his soul was carried by angels into everlasting glory,

where a crown of martyrdom was placed upon him, which can never fade nor decay.

Old Camden, with all his prejudices, is forced to acknowledge, that "More's behaviour in this last act, was not unbecoming the primitive age of the Christian church." Speaking of his serenity in these trying moments, another writer beautifully observes ; "How cheerfully did he undress himself for his spiritual repose !"

"Suffering virtue," says Father Southwell, "is like the precious Arabian gum, more fragrant when crushed and consumed !"

More has been censured by some for levity in these awful moments. It is a censorious cavil, which would be worthy of little notice had it not occasioned some sentences of as noble reflection, and beautiful composition, as the English language can boast. "The innocent mirth, which had been so conspicuous in his life, did not forsake him to the last. His death was of a piece with his life ; there was nothing in it new, forced, or affected. He did not look upon the severing of his head from his body as a circumstance which ought to produce any change in the disposition of his mind ; and as he died in a fixed and settled hope of immortality, he thought any unusual degree of sorrow and concern improper." (*Spectator*, No. 349.)

According to the barbarous practice of laws which vainly struggle to carry their cruelty beyond the grave, the head of Sir Thomas More was placed on London-bridge.* His darling daughter, Margaret,

* A poet of that period has the following lines on this subject, which are simple and pathetic :

Quod capiti quondam Ciceronis rostra fuere,

Hoc est pons capiti, More disertè, tuo :

Ducentes Angli suspiria pectore dicunt ;

"Doctior et melior nullus in orbe fuit !"

As Tully's bleeding head the rostrum bore,

See on yon bridge the head of martyred More.

Men cry, recoiling from the sight with pain ;

"When shall we look upon his like again !"

W.

had the courage to procure the head to be taken down, that she might exercise her affection by continuing to look on a head so dear. Carrying her love beyond the grave, she desired that it might be buried with her when she died, which was about nine years after the fate of her father. The remains of this precious relic are said to have been since observed in the burial-place, lying on what had been her bosom.

We learn from Cresacre, that More's headless body was, by order, interred in St. Peter's Chapel within the Tower, "near to the body of the holy martyr, Bishop Fisher, who being put to death just a fortnight before, had small respect done him all this while." Hall says he was interred in the same grave with his friend and fellow-sufferer,* who, like More, had appointed himself a tomb in his life-time, which his body never occupied.

We quote with pleasure the eloquent eulogy pronounced on Sir Thomas by the learned and liberal Mackintosh.

"Of all men nearly perfect, Sir Thomas More had, perhaps, the clearest marks of individual character. His peculiarities, though distinguishing him from all others, were yet withheld from growing into moral faults. It is not enough to say of him that he was unaffected, that he was natural, that he was simple; so the larger part of truly great men have been. But there is something homespun in More, which is common to him with scarcely any other,

* There is a rare engraving of a double portrait of More and Fisher, with the following inscription:

Anglia vos quondam, communis patria, junxit,

Sed magis innexuit religionis amor;

Oh! quum carnificis vos percutit una securis,

Unaque nex binis, unaque causa necis.

Whom England, common country, joined before,

Religion's holy bond but bound the more;

The self-same axe ennobles either name,

The same your death, and cause of death the same.

W.

and which gives to all his faculties and qualities the appearance of being the native growth of the soil. The homeliness of his pleasantry purifies it from show. He walks on the scaffold clad only in his household goodness. The unrefined benignity with which he ruled his patriarchal dwelling at Chelsea, enabled him to look on the axe without being disturbed by any feeling of hatred for the tyrant. This quality bound together his genius and learning, his eloquence and fame, with his homely and daily duties, bestowing a genuineness on all his good qualities, a dignity on the most ordinary offices of life, and an accessible familiarity on the virtues of the hero and the martyr, which silences every suspicion that his excellences were magnified.

“He thus simply performed great acts, and uttered great thoughts, because they were familiar to his great soul. The charm of this inborn and home-bred character seems as if it would have been taken off by polish. It is this household character which relieves our notion of him from vagueness, and divests perfection of that generality and coldness, to which the attempt to paint a perfect man is so liable.

“It will naturally, and very strongly, excite the regret of the good in every age, that the life of this best of men should have been in the power of him who was rarely surpassed in wickedness. But the execrable Henry was the means of drawing forth the magnanimity, the fortitude, and the meekness of More. Had Henry been a just and merciful monarch, we should not have known the degree of excellence to which human nature is capable of ascending. Catholics ought to see in More, that mildness and candour are the true ornaments of all modes of faith. Protestants ought to be taught humility and charity from this instance of the wisest and best of men falling into, what they deem, fatal errors. All men, in the fierce contests of contending factions, should, from such an example, learn

the wisdom to fear lest, in their most hated antagonist, they may strike down a Sir Thomas More; for assuredly virtue is not so narrow as to be confined to any party; and we have in the case of More, a signal example, that the nearest approach to perfect excellence does not exempt men from mistakes.

“It is a pregnant proof that we should beware of hating men for their opinions, or of adopting their doctrines, merely because we love and venerate their virtues.”

CHAPTER IX.

OPINIONS RESPECTING MORE.

Erasmus and Cardinal Pole on More's death—Impressions produced abroad by Henry's cruelty—Sentiments of Charles V. and Francis I. on that subject—Crumwell's instructions to the English ambassador in Paris—Flattery of Henry's courtiers—Conduct of the King when More's execution is announced to him—His treatment of More's family—Margaret Roper—Queen Catharine, More's attachment to her to the last—More's character—His piety—His humour—His singularity in dress—Description of his person—His tastes—Tribute to his memory.

WE have ample testimony remaining to us, that the sacrifice of More made an impression far beyond the limits of his own country, and of a deeper stamp than it has often been in the power of an individual to leave, who, like More, had been conspicuous, chiefly by his virtue in civil life. When Erasmus learned the sad tidings of the fate of his earliest and most constant friend, he could not suppress his emotion: "More is dead!" cried he; "More, whose breast was purer than snow, and whose genius was excellent beyond all of his nation. His goodness has so engraven him in men's hearts, that all lament his death, as if it were that of a father or a brother. I have seen tears flow from eyes that never saw him—from men who never received the slightest benefit from him—yea, while I am penning these lines, tears gush from my own eyes against my will." He terminates this burst of feeling with a little phrase of touching pathos: "In Moro mihi videor extinctus."—I seem to have died with More.

Cardinal Pole bewailed the death of his friend with elegance and feeling. After comparing his death to that of Socrates, he adds: "I have seen even the greatest strangers, men who never knew him, never shared a favour at his hands, so much affected by his death, that, in reading the history of it, they could not withhold their tears; they wept at the mere fame of his fate. And I, at this distance, when writing of his death, although I was not bound to him by any private ties, but loved and esteemed him rather for his virtue and probity, and from the sense I had of the important services he had rendered to my country, yet God is my witness that I shed involuntary tears, which so impede my pen, and blot what I write, that with difficulty do I proceed in my task."

So great was the impression produced on the Continent by these tragedies, as to inspire with caution all those who had transactions with the country. The reformers, Melancthon and Bucer, being about to proceed to London, on a mission from the Protestant Princes of Germany, felt no relish for the honour of martyrdom, and relinquished all immediate intention of their journey; and Erasmus emphatically describes the situation of the country, by stating that the most intimate friends were fearful of corresponding with each other.* It filled Italy, the most cultivated portion of Europe, with horror. Paulo Jovio, the historian, called Henry a second Phalaris, "though," says Mackintosh, "in vain do we look in that, or any other history of a tyrant, real or imaginary, for a victim worthy of being compared to More." The English ministers throughout Europe were regarded with averted eyes as the agents of a monster. The Catholic zeal of Spain, and the resentment of the Spanish people against the oppression of Catharine, quickened their sym-

* "The men who were highest in Henry's favour had their heads the nearest to danger."—*Cardinal Pole*.

pathy with More, and aggravated their detestation of Henry. Mason, the English agent in Spain, writes with strong feeling of the horror which he sees manifested around him at these deeds of blood. "What end," he exclaims, "this tragedy will have God only knows, if that indeed may be called a tragedy which began in a wedding!" Harvey, the resident in Venice, reports the indignation of the citizens at the destruction of men of such honour and virtue, in defiance of the laws both of God and man. He ends by declaring that all he hears disgusts him with public life, and disposes him to retire from such scenes. The Emperor Charles V., on the arrival of these tidings, sent for Sir Thomas Elliot, the English ambassador, and said to him: "Sir, we understand that the king your master has put his faithful servant and wise counsellor, Sir Thomas More, to death." Elliot replied that he knew nothing of the matter. "Well," said the emperor, "it is too true. And this will we say, that had we been master of such a servant, of whose doings ourselves have had these many years no small experience, we would rather have lost the best city of our dominions than such a counsellor." This anecdote, adds Roper, was reported to myself, my wife, and other friends, by Sir Thomas Elliot himself.

The King of France also spoke to the English ambassador of these executions with great severity, and gave it as his advice that Henry should banish such offenders, rather than put them to death. To counteract these unfavourable impressions, Crumwell addressed the following letter of instructions to Sir John Wallop, the King's ambassador in Paris. After discussing some minor matters, the letter continues as follows: "And concerning the executions done, you shall say to the French king, that the same were not so marvellous extreme as he allegeth; for touching Master More and the Bishop of Rochester, with such others as were executed here, their treasons,

conspiracies, and practices, secretly practised, as well within the realm as without, to move and stir dissension, and to sow sedition, intending thereby not only the destruction of the king, but also the whole subversion of his highness's realm, being explained and declared, and so manifestly proved before them, that they could not avoid nor deny it; and they, therefore, openly detected and lawfully convicted, judged, and condemned of high treason by the due order of the laws of this realm, it shall and may well appear to all the world, that they, having such malice rooted in their hearts against their prince and sovereign, and the total destruction of the commonweal of this realm, were well worthy, if they had had a thousand lives, to have suffered ten times a more terrible death and execution than any of them did suffer.—And touching such words as the French King spoke unto you, concerning how Master More died, and what he said to his daughter going to his judgment, and also what exhortations he should give unto the king's subjects to be true and obedient to his grace, I assure you there was no such thing. And the king's pleasure is, that you should say unto the said French king, that his highness cannot otherwise take it, but very unkindly, that the French king, or any of his council, at whose hands he hath so much merited, and to whom he hath ministered so many great benefits, pleasures, and commodities, should so lightly give ear, faith, and credence to any such vain bruits and flying tales, not having first knowledge or advertisement from the king here and his council, of their verity and truth: affirming it to be the office of a friend, hearing any such tales of so noble a prince, rather to have compressed the bearers thereof to silence, or, at the least, not to have permitted them to divulge the same until such time as the king's majesty, being so dear a friend, had been advertised thereof, and the truth known, before he should so lightly believe or allege any such report. This ingrate

and unkind demeanor of the said French king, used in this behalf, argueth plainly, that there do not remain in his breast that integrity of heart and sincere amity towards the king and his proceedings, as his highness always heretofore hath expected and looked for. Which thing you may propose and allege unto the said French king and the grand master, or to one of them, with such modesty and soberness as that you think they may perceive that the king's highness hath good and just cause on his part, somewhat to take their light credence unkindly. And thus making an end, I pray you to use your discretion in the proposing of the premises to the French king and the grand master, or the one or both of them; using the same as a medicine, and after such sort, that, as near as ye can, it may be not displeasingly taken. And so for this time I bid you most heartily farewell. At Thornbury, the 23d day of August, 1535.

Your assured friend,
THOMAS CRUMWELL.*

The direct and unblushing contempt of truth displayed in this letter, and its flat contradictions of facts that had passed but a few days before under the very eyes of astonished Europe, need no comment here, but naturally lead us to reflect upon the character of the council of which Crumwell was the head. In order to form a just estimate of the virtues and vices of an individual, the circumstances of his age, and the character of his contemporaries, should be taken into consideration.

Strype, anxious as he is on all occasions to save Henry's character, is obliged to acknowledge "how mortally the king was hated in Italy, and railed at in all societies abroad." There were, however, sycophants at home who strove to neutralize the effect of this by a larger dose of flattery. Listen

* Strype's *Memorials*, p. 166.

to Sir R. Morryson: "Quis tam barbarus, ut in principis serenissimo ore, clementissimi regis signa non videat? Quis potuit unquam frontem illam vel procul vidisse, et non agnovisse clementiæ sedem?"*

And Sir Thomas Chaloner thus pens in heroics an excuse for his little peccadilloes:

Quominus id mirum est, si fortunatior et rex
Indulsit genio, admittens quandoque proterva,
At non immani veniam superantia facto.†

It will place the virtue of More in stronger relief to contrast it with the weakness and vices of the leading men of the age in which he lived. They are thus described by a masterly and impartial pen: "They yielded to every mandate of his [Henry's] imperious will; they bent with every breath of his capricious humour; they are responsible for the illegal trial, for the iniquitous attainder, for the sanguinary statute, for the tyranny which they sanctioned by law, and for that which they permitted to subsist without law. Nor was this selfish and pusillanimous subserviency more characteristic of the minions of Henry's favour, the Crumwells, the Riders, the Pagets, the Russells, and the Pauletts, than of the representatives of ancient and honourable names, the Norfolks, the Arundels, the Shrewsburies. We trace these noble statesmen concurring in all the inconsistencies of this reign, and supporting all the changes of religion; constant only in the rapacious acquisition of estates and honours from whatever source, and in adherence to the present power."—(Hallam, *Constitu. Hist.* I. 51.)

* Who so barbarous as not to recognize in that serenest of countenances the living impress of the most clement of kings? Who could gaze on that brow, even from a distance, and not hail it as the throne of clemency?

"The grossest libel upon worn-out cruelty, is to *honest* it with the title of clemency."—*Sir Thos. Overbury*.

† What wonder if a highly favour'd king
Should now and then commit a naughty thing,
Indulging, as he may, a royal taste;
Venial in him what others had disgrac'd.

In a book called "The Politic Glass," printed about this period, is the following picture of the courtiers of this reign: "Many in the court pull off their caps to thee, who would be glad to see thy head from thy shoulders; such men bow the knee to do thee reverence, as would as soon they had broken their leg to carry thee to thy grave. There is always, I know not what, nor how, nor who, but so it is, that incessantly one complaineth, another murmureth, another changeth, another hateth and despiseth. When those who dwell here come to old age, knowest thou what they bring from thence? gray heads, feet full of gout, the mouth toothless, the back full of pain, the heart full of sorrowful thoughts, and the soul full of sin."

While in foreign countries the news of Henry's cruelty was received with loud and general execration, in England the intelligence of what had passed in the capital was listened to with deep but silent sorrow. When it was recollected that the deed was perpetrated against one who had been familiarly admitted to the unreserve of his domestic hours, who had shared with him in the tranquil studies of the closet and the observatory, with whom he had taken sweet counsel, and in whose playful wit he had found a relaxation from the cares of his kingly office, men were filled with amazement, and unable to furnish a solution to a mystery so incomprehensible. Some of those who durst think for themselves, no doubt concluded, with a writer of our own day, that "in this direful deed, Henry perhaps approached as nearly to the ideal standard of perfect wickedness as the infirmities of human nature will allow."—(Mackintosh, *Hist. Eng.* chap. VII.)

And yet the king is said to have put on the decent air of regret for the act he had committed. It is stated that when he received the report of More's execution, he was playing at draughts, while Anne Boleyn was looking on. Casting his eyes fiercely

on the wretched woman, who in a few months was to expiate her indiscretions, if not her crimes, upon the scaffold, he exclaimed: "Thou art the cause of this man's death!" and abruptly breaking off the game, he betook himself to his chamber, and fell into a fit of melancholy.* But here the expression of Henry's regret terminated, and the family of his victim were still the objects of his unmanly vengeance. The small wreck of More's fortune, which had been wasted in the public service, was seized as a forfeiture to the crown, although the anxious father had endeavoured to secure it to his unhappy family, by executing conveyances previous to his condemnation for treason: and in such abject misery were they left, that they were unable even to purchase a winding-sheet for his remains. It was supplied by the liberality of a friend. His family was driven from his favourite residence at Chelsea, which passed into the hands of a court favourite.† Henry, how-

* In one of his elegant elegies on More, Johannes Secundus has these verses:

*Insomnem interea infestat torva umbra tyrannum
Semper, et ante oculos sanguinolenta volat.*

Before his sleepless eyes thy ghost is found,
Still pointing to the fresh and gory wound.

We fear that the poet has given Henry credit for more susceptibility than remained in his altered nature. It was but a flash of feeling, buried at once in the returning gloom.

† "The fate of this house would seem to correspond with the fortunes of its master, having known a variety of changes. By Henry it was granted to Sir William Paulet, afterwards Marquis of Winchester, and Lord High Treasurer. From this family it successively passed into the hands of Lord Dacre, the famous Lord Burleigh, his son the Earl of Salisbury, the Earl of Lincoln, Sir Anthony Gorges, the Earl of Middlesex, Villiers Duke of Buckingham, Sir Bulstrode Whitlocke, one of Cromwell's knights, the witty and profligate Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Bristol, the Duke of Beaufort, and finally of Sir Hans Sloane, in 1738, who pulled it down two years afterwards. The choice of so many noble possessors, if it be a testimony to the taste of More, in the selection of the site, and the disposition of the grounds, is no less a satire on the president of the Royal Society, who, amidst all his professions of fine taste and regard for antiquities, levelled this ancient mansion with the ground, and made a present of the beautiful gateway added by Inigo Jones, to some friend, for the ornament of an unknown villa."—Macdiarmid, *Lives of Brit. Statesmen*, p. 118.

ever, with a kingly generosity, allowed his widow a pittance of twenty pounds a year! His son, John More, a man remarkable for the innocency of his manners, had nearly shared the same fate with himself. Condemned for refusing the oath of supremacy, he was, however, afterwards pardoned by an act of royal clemency; "because," adds Cresacre, "they had sufficiently fleeced him before, and could get nothing further by his death. My aunt Roper," continues the same faithful chronicler, "because she was a woman, was not so hardly dealt with, but only threatened very sore, both because she kept her father's head as a relic, and that she meant to put her father's works in print; yet, for all that, she was thrown into prison, where, after a short confinement, she was at last sent home to her husband."

This admirable woman died in 1544, nine years after her father, and was buried in the family vault in St. Dunstan's church in the suburbs of Canterbury. It was her dying request, that the head of her beloved father, which had been preserved with religious care, should be placed within her arms: a request which was faithfully complied with. She had two sons and three daughters, on whose education she had bestowed the same care that had been taken of her own. The famous scholar, Roger Ascham, afterwards Preceptor and Latin Secretary to Queen Elizabeth, informs us that she was very desirous of having him for her children's tutor in the classical languages, but as his other duties prevented him from accepting the engagement, he recommended Dr. Cole, and Dr. Christopherson, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, both known for their skill in the Greek language. Ascham styles the eldest of Margaret's daughters, who married a lawyer of the name of Clarke, an elegant ornament of her sex, and of Queen Mary's court. Margaret's second daughter, who married Mr. Basset, was one of the gentlewomen of Queen Mary's privy chamber, and translated into

English a part of her grandfather's "Exposition of the Passion;" and is said to have so faithfully imitated Sir Thomas' style, that many were led to think it his.

The firmness with which More upheld to the last the cause of his early friend and patroness, the virtuous and high-minded Catharine, is honourable to his memory. That More continued his affectionate regard, and good offices, not only to her, but also to her daughter the Princess Mary, we gather from Rastell's dedication of More's works to the latter, in which he says; "Sir Thomas More, while he lived, did bear towards your highness a special zeal, an entire affection, and reverent devotion; and, on the other side, your grace, as is well known, had towards him, in his life-time, a benevolent mind and singular favour, not only for his great learning, but also for his much virtue. And I am fully persuaded that your highness's good affection towards him, is no wit diminished now after his death, but rather by his worthy works and goodly end more and more increased, who, now being with Almighty God, and living in heaven with him, with much greater zeal and devotion towards your majesty, than he had while here on earth, ceaseth not to pray for the king's majesty, for your highness, your subjects, your realms and dominions, and for the commonwealth and Catholic religion of the same, and for all Christian realms also."

To attempt the eulogium of such a man as More, would surely be a work of supererogation.—"Praise Hercules!" said the honest Spartan; "who ever thought of blaming Hercules?" All we shall do is to enlarge a little upon More's character. He was not only warmly attached to the faith of his fathers, but a zealous observer of all the rites and ceremonies of the church. We have already seen instances of this feeling of his, at which modern indifference would doubtless be disposed to smile.

We may be allowed to add another, which we find in Roper, the faithful recorder of his minutest actions. "In the public processions, also, such as on the feast of *Corpus Christi*, and other festivals of note, he would carry the cross before the rest, thinking himself happy, if he could, in any way, show his love of God, and his ready zeal in his service." But this attention to outward observances, was but the effect of that religion of the heart, which urged him to make rapid advances in the path of Christian perfection. "Though," says Roper, who never quitted his father-in-law's side, for nearly the last twenty years of his life, and knew his inmost heart, "Though he would appear like other men in his apparel and outward behaviour, yet was he singularly wise in deceiving the world with his mortifications: content with the knowledge that God had of his actions, and well aware that 'the Father who seeth in secret would render to him openly.' Yet in the midst of the duties of his public station, at the bar, on the bench, and in his embassies at foreign courts, he continued to practise the mortifications of a recluse; and when forced, in his office of chancellor, to mingle more frequently amidst the corruptions of the court, he did but redouble these practices of devotion.* From the eye of the world these austerities were scrupulously concealed; they were among the secrets of which his beloved daughter Margaret was the sole depository. She was in the habit of washing with her own hands the hair-shirt which he habitually wore, and which we have seen carefully conveyed to her on the eve of his execution.

Even Dr. Wordsworth is so condescending as to allow, that no where has he "found popery asso-

* We may apply to More what was happily said of another illustrious character: "He was one of those divine men, who, like a chapel in a palace, remain unprofaned, while all around is disorder and corruption."

ciated with greater piety and heavenly-mindedness than in Sir Thomas More.”—*Eccles. Biog. Pref.* xviii.

Even Burnet, though he represents More as “superstitiously devoted to the interests and passions of the clergy, serving them when in authority, and assisting them in all their cruelties,” yet is obliged to confess, that he is “one of the glories of the nation for probity and learning: and for justice, contempt of money, humility, and a true generosity of mind, he was an example to the age in which he lived.”—(p. 356.)

A moralist has said, that “to be a good man and a disagreeable one, is a kind of treason against virtue:” and yet there are those who would fain have good men, if not disagreeable, at least austere and morose. Thus old Hall describes More as “a man well learned in the tongues, and also in the common law, whose wit was fine, and full of imaginations, by reason whereof he was much given to mocking, which was to his gravity a great blemish.” In another place this most solemn of historians remarks: “I cannot tell whether I should call him a foolish-wise man, or a wise-foolish man;* for undoubtedly, besides his learning he had a great wit, but it was so mingled with taunting and mocking, that it seemed to those that best knew him, that he thought nothing to be well spoken, except he had ministered some mock in the communication.” The court historian is particularly displeased with the “mocking” in the following instance:—“Even when going to his death, at the Tower-gate, a poor woman asked him for certain evidences of hers, in the time he was in office, which, after he was apprehended,

* This ill natured antithesis called forth the following well turned epigram:

Ἡ εἰς μαροσόφον μὲν ἀν εἰποῖς ἡ σοφομωρον,
Μωροῦ; γὰρ κοσμῷ εἰμι, σοφὸς τε θεῷ.

Wise-foolish, foolish-wise!—nay, not so odd;
To the world foolish, but how wise to God!

W.

she could not come by. He answered: 'My good woman, have patience but a little while longer; for the king is so good to me, that, within this half hour or so, he will discharge me of all business, and help thee himself.' "

Herbert says of him: "His jests were thought to have too much levity in them; he might have resigned his dignity without using such sarcasms, and have betaken himself to a more retired and quiet life, without making his family and himself contemptible."

Fuller's observations on this point are in his peculiar way: "Some ground we have in England, neither so light and loose as sand, nor so stiff and binding as clay, but a mixture of both, regarded as the surest soil for profit and pleasure to grow together; of such a soil was Sir Thomas More, in whom facetiousness and judiciousness were excellently tempered together. And yet some have taxed him, that he wore a feather in his cap, and wagged it too often; meaning that he was over-free in his fancies and conceits. Even at the scaffold—a place not to break jests on, but to break off jesting—he could not contain. Now though innocency may smile at death, surely it is unfit to flout thereat."

But let us listen to those who knew Sir Thomas better, and have described him to the life. On the subject of his habitual gaiety of mind, Roper says, "he has the art to temper all serious matters with some witty device or other." "Always seasoning," says Rastell, "the troublesomeness of the matter with some merry jest or pleasant tale, as it were the sweet to tempt us more willingly to drink of the wholesome drug."*

* *Cost all' egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
Di soave licor gli orli del vaso;
Succi amari ingannato intanto ei beve,
E dall'inganno suo vita riceve.*

Tasso.

*So to the child, in sickness languishing,
Its edge with honey ting'd the cup we bring;
He drinks the healing bitter in the sweet,
For life indebted to the happy cheat.*

W.

When delivered of his jest, says Cresacre, he was never seen to laugh himself, but always spoke it so gravely, that few could see by his look whether he spoke in earnest or not.* “And yet,” adds his faithful historian, “though he never left his mirth in outward appearance, his heart was ever humble and mortified, and he exercised acts of self-denial which worldly men would have wondered at.”

More had his *wit-word*† at every turn. The reader has seen numerous instances in the course of our narrative: but we cannot resist the opportunity of quoting one or two other examples.

Hearing a friend of his accuse his wife of being a shrew, he said to him with his usual immovable gravity—“Nay, nay, my friend, you defame the good woman, and so do all those who say the like of their wives. There is but one shrew in the world, and, with reverence be it spoken, that is my own—and so may every man say that is married.” But, adds the author of the anonymous life, with much gravity, “Sir Thomas so much bettered the state of mind of this wife of his, that I doubt not she is a saved soul, and that they now enjoy each other’s company in bliss.”

More had lent a sum of money to a man, and not finding it forthcoming at the time promised, took occasion to give him a gentle hint respecting it.—Instead of satisfying Sir Thomas, the borrower began to moralise on the thing; he said our sojourn here below was short, that we were too apt to set our hearts upon riches; that we might be called away,

* “Ye use to look so sadly when ye mean merrily, that many times men doubt whether ye speak in sport, or mean in good earnest.”—*More’s Dialogue*, p. 18.

† Wit is the more pointed for being dry and serious; for it then seems as if the speaker himself had no intention in it, and that we were the first to find it out.”—*Hazlitt*.

‡ We would venture to propose the revival of this expressive old Saxon term, which exactly corresponds to the *mot* of the French, and is more comprehensive than our *saying*.

Heaven knows how soon, and then we should have little use of money, and therefore, added he, *memento morieris*. "There, you have it," said Sir Thomas; "follow up your maxim—*Memento Mori æris* (Remember More's money)."

Some one, more busy about other persons' affairs than his own, plucking him by the sleeve one day, and lamenting how much Price, Wolsey's secretary, had disgraced himself by appearing at a masquerade in a fool's coat: "Nay, nay, excuse him," said More; "it is less hurtful to the commonwealth when wise men go in fools' coats, in jest, than when fools go in wise men's, in earnest."

There is no man so morose, says Erasmus, whom his playful humour cannot relax; there is no matter, however dry and forbidding, to which his wit cannot impart grace and vivacity.

The difference is immense between the natural humorist, like More, and the man who *labours* to amuse others, or who indulges his own spleen at the expense of his neighbours: in the latter, ridicule is an exotic; in the former, it is the spontaneous growth of the soil.

The great master of human life might almost be thought to have had Sir Thomas in his eye, in the following sketch:

A merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal:
His eye begets occasion for his wit—
For, every object that the one doth catch,
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest;
Which his fair tongue—conceit's expositor—
Delivers in such apt and gracious words,
That aged ears play truant at his tales,
And younger hearings are quite ravished,
So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

Shakspeare.

There was a certain dash of singularity in More's dress, as in every thing else. Erasmus says that he used to wear his lawyer's gown awry, which gave him the appearance of having one shoulder

higher than the other. And as the peculiarities of every great man are sure to find imitators, old Ascham tells us that other lawyers would imitate this negligent air of his; and yet, adds he, silyly, though they contrived to resemble him in this, they were most unlike him in the more essential things of wit and learning. Cresacre tells us that he had no care what apparel he wore, insomuch that being once told by his secretary, Harris, that he had no shoes fit to put on; well, says he, tell "my tutor" to look to it—for by that name he called the servant to whose discretion he left the management of his wardrobe—"never troubling his mind about such matters."

Sir Thomas More is thus described by his grandson:—"He was somewhat low in stature, yet well proportioned; his complexion pale, his hair neither black nor yellow [probably chestnut], his eyes gray, his countenance amiable and cheerful, his voice neither loud nor shrill, but speaking plainly and distinctly; though he delighted much in music, it was not very tuneable; his health tolerably good, only that towards his latter end, by using much writing, he complained of a pain in the breast.

"His table was well supplied, yet he ate only of one dish himself, which was usually salted meat. He was fond of coarse brown bread, milk, cheese, eggs, and fruit. In his youth he wholly abstained from wine; and in his latter years he took it only diluted with water, or when he pledged his friends."

Rastell represents More as fond of natural history; we quote his words: "He had great pleasure in beholding the form and fashion of beasts and fowl of all kinds. There was scarcely any sort of birds that he had not in his house. He kept an ape, a fox, a weasel, a ferret, and other beasts more rare. If there were any strange things brought out

of other countries, and worthy to be looked on, he was desirous to buy it."

In summing up the character of his friend, Erasmus says, that More was gay without buffoonery; that his society was so captivating, that however downcast a person might be when he first approached him, it was impossible not to be cheered and enlivened by his company; that, from his very childhood, he had been fond of pleasantry, but that it never degenerated into ribaldry. That though he loved ease and tranquillity, no one, when occasion required it, was more earnest in any undertaking.

We cannot conclude more appropriately than by the eloquent tribute to More's memory from the pen of Macdiarmid.

"We have now seen the rise, progress, and end of a man, singular in the history of his species, and affording examples worthy of imitation to every individual of his race. In private life, as a son, a husband, a father, a master, and a friend, no character can be contemplated with greater delight, no conduct imitated with more certain advantage.—Careful to discharge every duty which he owed, and limiting his good offices, not by the claims of duty, but by the extent of his power, he found all the relations which united him to his fellow-men, cemented by affection, and strengthened by gratitude. Within the circle of his own family, by persuading where he might have commanded, by alluring where he might have threatened, by being familiar where he might have been haughty, by employing ridicule in place of severity, and mingling good-humour with every injunction, he was beloved without any mixture of dread, and obeyed with all the alacrity of affection. Anxious that the objects of his fondest attachments should be endued with every quality which could dignify their nature, or secure their felicity, he enforced his instructions by example; and the per-

petnal happiness which seemed to flow from his activity, his ardent love of literature, his integrity, his beneficence, his piety, proved an irresistible admonition to the practice of his precepts.

“His public life exhibited a combination of virtues and vicissitudes rarely presented in the history of our race. Without having ever deviated, or been suspected to deviate from the strictest integrity, he rose to the greatest eminence as a lawyer, and the highest rank as a statesman. Without having embarked in one court intrigue, or been guilty of one improper compliance, he obtained the complete confidence of an arbitrary monarch: he enjoyed this confidence for years, without having requested one personal favour. Although the only art which he employed to obtain success in his profession, or the favour of his prince, was the strenuous and unremitting discharge of the duties of his station; yet such was the influence which he acquired over the minds of men, that he was loaded with professional business amidst an extensive competition, and compelled by his sovereign to accept of the most coveted public employments. As a pleader, his exertions were never unapplauded; as a judge, his decisions were never controverted; as a statesman, his counsels were never suspected. In one unfortunate conjuncture, we find the prejudices of education and the violence of theological dissensions, confounding his better judgment, and hurrying him into acts, which neither justice nor humanity can pass uncensured: yet, even then, he acted from mistaken principle.

“The succeeding transactions of his life present only objects of admiration. Anxiously procuring his dismissal from office, when he could no longer serve his country without sacrificing his integrity, he retired from power, splendour, and affluence, to all the privations of a poverty, the fruit of his disinterested patriotism. Yet his cheerfulness suffered

no diminution ; and if he looked back on his former state, it was only with a smile of satisfaction at the temptations which he had escaped. As the closing prospects of life darkened around him, his unaltered mind appeared only more brilliant from the contrast ; and his departure from the world seemed too desirable to excite regret. Many have met their undeserved death on the scaffold with undaunted heroism ; but few have so completely overcome the apprehension of quitting life, the anguish of parting with friends, and indignation at the malice of enemies, as to display, in their behaviour, no constrained fortitude, no affected tranquillity, no ill-disguised bitterness at the injustice of their fate. Yet so well did the mind of More appear reconciled to this world, and tempered for the next, that he seemed well-pleased with his stay, yet gratified with his departure. On the scaffold, he proved by example, that there is nothing to excite dismay, nothing to call forth pity, in the death of the innocent : and fell a memorable martyr in the cause of integrity, a memorable instance of the ascendancy which the human mind may acquire over every antagonist with which it is destined to combat."

APPENDIX.

No. 1. (See page 134.)

*Queen Catharine and King Henry to Cardinal Wolsey :
a joint letter—(1527.)*

MY LORD :—In the most humble wise that my heart can think, I pray you to pardon me that I am so bold to trouble you with my simple and rude writing, esteeming it to proceed from her that is much desirous to know that your grace does well, as I perceive by this bearer that you do ; the which I pray God long to continue, as I am most bound to pray : for I do know that the great pains and trouble you have taken for me, both day and night, is never likely to be recompensed on my part, but only in loving you next unto the king's grace above all creatures living ; and do not doubt but the daily proofs of my deeds shall manifestly declare and affirm my writing to be true, and I trust you do think the same. My lord, I do assure you that I do much desire to hear from you some news of the Legate, for I do hope as they come from you they shall be very good, and I am sure that you desire it as much as I, and more an it were possible, as I know it is not. Confirmed in a stedfast hope, I make an end of my letter, written with the hand of her that is most bound to be —

[Here Queen Catharine's part ends, and Henry concludes the letter.]

The writer of this letter would not cease till she

had caused me likewise to set to my hand, desiring you, though it be short, to take it in good part. I assure you there is neither of us but that greatly desireth to see you, and much more rejoice to hear that you have escaped this plague so well, trusting the fury thereof to be passed, especially with them that keep good diet, as I trust you do. The not hearing of the Legate's arrival in France causeth us somewhat to muse; notwithstanding we trust, by your diligence and vigilancy (with the assistance of Almighty God), shortly to be eased out of that trouble. So no more to you at this time, but that I pray God send you as good health and prosperity as the writers would.

By your loving Sovereign and Friend,
HENRY R.

This is a highly interesting letter, as furnishing another proof, among the many, that, whatever were Henry's scruples, if any such indeed troubled his mind, or however blinded by his criminal passion for Anne Boleyn, or determined at all hazards to get rid of Catharine, he could not but respect her. It is evident that the queen's mind is full of anxiety for the coming of Cardinal Campeggio, and this feeling is earnestly, naturally, and undisguisedly expressed; not so the manner in which the king speaks of it; his expressions, though simple in appearance, will, if duly weighed, be found cautious, and calculated to meet the unsuspecting eye of the queen.

No. 2. (See page 194.)

More's Epitaph, composed by himself.

THOMAS MORUS,

Urbe Londinensi, familiâ non celebri sed honestâ, natus, in literis utcunque versatus, quum et causas aliquot annos juvenis egisset in foro, et in urbe suâ pro Shyrevo jus dixisset, ab invictissimo rege Henrico octavo (cui uni regum omnium gloria prius inaudita contigit, ut FIDEI DEFENSOR, qualem et gladio se et calamo vere prestitit, meritò vocaretur) adscitus in Aulam est, delectusque in Consilium, et creatus Eques, Proquestor primam post Cancellaria-

rius Lancastriæ, tandem Angliæ, miro Principis favore factus est. Sed interim in publico regni Senatu lectus est Orator populi; præterea legatus regis nonnunquam fuit alias alibi; postremò verò Cameraci comes et collega junctus principi legationis Cuthberto Tunstallo, tum Londinensi mox Dunelmensi episcopo, quo viro vix habet orbis hodie eruditius, prudentius, melius. Ibi inter summos orbis Christiani monarchas rursus resecta fœdera, redditamque mundo diu desideratam pacem, et lætissimus vidit, et legatus interfuit. Quam Superi pacem firment fastinque perennem! In hoc officiorum vel honorum cursu quum ita versaretur ut neque princeps optimus operam ejus improbare, neque nobilibus esset invisus, nec injucundus populo, furibus autem, homocidis, []* molestus, pater ejus tandem Joannes Morus, eques, et in eum judicum ordinem a principe cooptatus, qui regius consessus vocatur, homo civilis, suavis, innocens, mitis, misericors, æquus, et integer, annis quidem gravis, sed corpore plusquam pro ætate virido, postquam eò productam sibi vitam vidit, ut filium videret Angliæ Cancellarium, satis in terrâ jam se moratum ratus, libens emigravit in cælum. At filius, defuncto patre, cui quamdiu supererat comparatus et juvenis vocari consueverat, et ipse quoque sibi videbatur, amissum jam patrem requirens, et editos ex se liberos quatuor ac nepotes undecim respiciens, apud animum suum cæpit persenescere. Auxit hunc affectum animi subsecuta statim, velut adparentis senii signum, pectoris valetudo deterior. Itaque mortalium harum rerum satur, quam rem a puero

* "This blank was filled up, or intended to be filled up, with the word *hereticisque*. As the blank, however, is perfectly plain, and no symptom of erasure appears on the marble, it may be supposed that More, from farther reflection, rather chose to have a space vacant for the word, than actually to inscribe it. Another explanation has been given. It is conjectured that in the reparation of the monument by one of More's descendants, the obnoxious word was omitted. The perfect smoothness of the marble seems, however, to favour the former supposition."—*Macdiarmid*, p. 17.

penè semper optaverat, ut ultimos aliquot vitæ suæ annos obtineret liberos, quibus hujus vitæ negociis paulatim se abducens, futuræ posset immortalitatem meditari, eam rem tandem (sic cœptis annuit Deus) indulgentissimi principis incomparabili beneficio resignatis honoribus impetravit; atque hoc sepulchrum sibi, quod mortis eum nunquam cessantis abrepere quotidie commonefaceret, translatis huc prioris uxoris ossibus, extruendum curavit. Quod ne superstes frustra sibi fecerit, neve ingruentem trepidus mortem horreat, sed desiderio Christi libens oppetat, mortemque ut sibi non omnino mortem, sed januam vitæ fœlicioris inveniatur, precibus eum piis, lector optime, spirantem precor defunctumque proseguere.

Chara Thomæ jacet hic Joanna uxorcula* Mori,
 Qui tumulum Aliciæ hunc destino, quique mihi.
 Una mihi dedit hoc conjuncta virentibus annis,
 Me vocet ut puer et trina puella patrem :
 Altera privignis (quæ gloria rara novercæ est)
 Tam pia quàm gratis vix fuit ulla suis.
 Altera sic mecum vixit, sic altera vivit.
 Charior incertum est, hæc sit, an hæc fuerit.
 O simul ! O juncti poteramus vivere nos tres
 Quam bene, si fatum religioque sinant !
 At societ tumulus, societ nos obsecro cœlum,
 Sic mors, non potuit quod dare vita, dabit.

(Translation.)

THOMAS MORE,

Born in the city of London, of no distinguished but of an honest family, was somewhat versed in letters ; in his youth he pleaded at the bar some years, and discharged the office of under-sheriff in that city ; afterwards by the redoubted King Henry VIII. (to whom alone among kings accrued the glory, before unknown, of being deservedly entitled Defender of the Faith, as indeed he proved himself as

* " The longer and more laboured commendation of Alice is outweighed in tenderness by the single word of endearment *uxorcula*, applied to the long-departed companion of his youth."—*Macintosh*.

well by the sword as the pen,) he was called to court, chosen a privy-councillor, knighted, and made sub-treasurer, chancellor of Lancaster, and at length of England, by the distinguished favour of his prince. In the meantime, he had been chosen speaker of the commons, and appointed envoy to various courts, and, last of all, to Cambray, being associated with Cuthbert Tunstall, the chief of that embassy, then Bishop of London, and since of Durham; a man, than whom the world can scarcely boast one more learned, or of more prudence and virtue. There he had the satisfaction to witness, and to negotiate, the renewal of the leagues between the chief princes of Christendom, and the restoration to the world of long-wished for peace; which blessing may Heaven confirm and long preserve! When he had so traversed this career of duties and honours, that neither could his good king disapprove, nor the peers of the land, to whom he was no object of envy, nor the people, to whom his services were grateful, discommend, though he had been severe to thieves, murderers, and []. At length his father, Sir John More, who had been appointed by his majesty a judge in the king's bench, a man of courteous and pleasant manners, harmless, gentle, full of compassion, just and uncorrupt, old indeed in years, yet fresh for his age in bodily strength, after living to see his son chancellor of England, thinking he had tarried long enough on earth, passed willingly to heaven. The son, on the death of his father, compared to whom, while he lived, he was called a young man, and indeed seemed so to himself, being now deprived of his father, and beholding four children of his own, and eleven grand-children, began to fancy himself growing old, and this fancy was strengthened by the immediate succession of a disorder in his breast, a symptom as it were of approaching age. Having, then, tasted plentifully of this world's pursuits—the thing he had always wished for from a boy, that he

might enjoy some of his latter years free, and withdrawing himself by degrees from the business of the world, might have leisure to meditate on immortality—that thing at last, (God allowing,) by the incomparable kindness of his most indulgent king, having resigned his honours, he hath obtained; and he hath erected this monument, as a constant memorial of his ever-approaching death, having removed thither the remains of his first wife. That he may not have done this in vain while yet he lived, that he dread not the approach of death, but meet it cheerfully for the love of Christ, and that he find death not so much death, as the gate of a happier existence, do thou, good reader, assist him with thy pious prayers, as well now while he liveth, as after his decease.

Jane, More's dear wife, within this tomb reclines,
This, More for Alice and himself designs.
The first, who won me with her youthful charms,
Blest with three daughters and a son these arms:

The next—ah! virtue in a step-dame rare!
Nursed my sweet infants with a mother's care.
With both my years so happily have sped.
Both have my heart, the living and the dead.

Had not religion's sacred law denied,
How sweetly had the triple knot been tied!
We, whom the tomb unites, in heaven shall live,
And death shall grant us what life could not give.

No. 3. (See page 232.)

Sir Thomas More to Secretary Cromwell.

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL—After my most hearty commendation, with like thanks for your goodness in accepting of my rude long letter: I perceive, that, of your further goodness and favour towards me, it liked your mastership to break with my son Roper of that, that I had had communication, not only with

divers that were of acquaintance with the lewd * nun of Canterbury, but also with herself; and had, over that, by my writing, declaring favour towards her, giving her advice and counsel; of which my demeanour, that it liketh you to be content to take the labour and the pain to hear, by mine own writing, the truth, I very heartily thank you, and reckon myself therein right deeply beholden to you.

It is, I suppose, about eight or nine years ago since I heard of that housewife first; at which time, the Bishop of Canterbury that then was—God assoil his soul! sent unto the king's grace a roll of paper, in which were written certain words of hers, that she had, as report was then made, at sundry times, spoken in her trances; whereupon it pleased the king's grace to deliver me the roll, commanding me to look therein, and afterwards show him what I thought thereon. Whereunto, at another time, when his highness asked me, I told him, that in good faith I found nothing in these words that I could any thing regard or esteem; for seeing that some part fell in rhyme, and that, God wot, full rude also; for any reason, God wot, that I saw therein, a right simple woman might, in my mind, speak it of her own wit well enough. Howbeit, I said, that because it was constantly reported for a truth, that God wrought in her, and that a miracle was showed upon her, I durst not, nor would not, be bold in judging the matter. And the king's grace, as methought, esteemed the matter as light as it after proved lewd.

From that time, till about Christmas was twelvemonth, albeit that continually there was much talking of her, and of her holiness, yet never heard I any talk rehearsed, either of revelation of hers, or miracle, saving that I heard say divers times, in my lord Cardinal's days, that she had been both with his lordship, and with the king's grace, but what she said, either to the one or to the other, upon my faith

* *Lewd* in the acceptation of this age signified ignorant.

I had never heard any one word. Now, as I was about to tell you, about Christmas was twelve-month, Father Risby, Friar Observant, then of Canterbury, lodged one night at mine house ; where, after supper, a little before he went to his chamber, he fell in communication with me of the nun, giving her high commendation of holiness, and that it was wonderful to see and understand the works that God wrought in her ; which thing I answered, that I was very glad to hear, and thanked God thereof. Then he told me, that she had been with my lord legate in his life-time, and with the king's grace too ; and that she had told my lord legate a revelation of hers, of three swords that God hath put in my lord legate's hand, which if he ordered not well, God would lay it sore to his charge. The first, she said, was the ordering the spirituality under the Pope, as legate ; the second, the rule that he bore in order of the temporality under the king, as his chancellor ; and the third, she said, was the meddling he was put in trust with by the king, concerning the great matter of his marriage. And therewithal I said unto him, that any revelation of the king's matters I would not hear of. I doubted not but the goodness of God would direct his highness, with his grace and wisdom, that the thing should take such end as God should be pleased with, to the king's honour and surety of the realm. When he heard me say these words, or the like, he said unto me, that God had specially commanded her to pray for the king ; and forthwith he broke again into her revelations concerning the cardinal, that his soul was saved by her mediation ; and without any other communication went unto his chamber. And he and I never talked any more of any such manner of matter, nor since his departing on the morrow, did I ever see him afterwards, to my remembrance, till I saw him at Paul's Cross.

After this, about Shrovetide, there came unto me, a little before supper, Father Rich, Friar Observant

of Richmond; and as we fell in talking, I asked him of Father Risby, how he did? And upon that occasion, he asked me, whether Father Risby had any thing showed me of the holy Nun of Kent? and I said, Yea, and that I was very glad to hear of her virtue. I would not, quoth he, tell you again what you have heard of her already: but I have heard and known many great graces that God hath wrought in her, and in other folk by her, which I would gladly tell you, if I thought you had not heard them already. And therewith he asked me, whether Father Risby had told me any thing of her being with my lord cardinal; and I said, Yea: then he told you, quoth he, of the three swords: Yea verily, quoth I. Did he tell you, quoth he, of the revelations that she had concerning the king's grace? Nay, forsooth, quoth I, nor if he would have done so, would I have given him the hearing. Nor verily no more I would indeed, for since she hath been with the king's grace herself, and told him, methought it a thing needless to tell it to me, or to any man else. And when Father Rich perceived that I would not hear her revelations concerning the king's grace, he talked on a little of her virtue, and let her revelations alone; and therewith my supper was set upon the board, where I required him to sit with me; but he would in no wise tarry, but departed to London. After that night I talked with him twice, once in mine own house, another time in his own garden at the Friars, at every time a great space, but not of any revelations touching the king's grace, but only of other mean talk, I knew not what, of which things, some were very strange, and some were very childish. But albeit, that he said, he had seen her lie in her trance in great pains, and that he had at other times taken great spiritual comfort in her communication, yet did he never tell me that she had told him those tales herself; for if he had, I would, for the tale of Mary Magdalene which he told me, and for the

tale of the Host, with which, as I have heard, she said she was houseled at the king's mass at Calais: if I had heard it of him, as told unto himself by her mouth for a revelation, I should have both liked him and her the worse. But whether ever I heard the same tale of Rich or of Risby, or of neither of them both, but of some other man, since she was in hold, in good faith I cannot tell: but I wot well when or wheresoever I heard it, methought it a tale too marvellous to be true, and very likely that she had told some man her dream, who told it again for a revelation. And in effect, I little doubted but that some of these tales that were told of her were untrue; but yet since I never heard them reported as spoken by her own mouth, I thought, nevertheless, that many of them might be true, and she a very virtuous woman too; as some lies be, peradventure, written of some that be saints in heaven, and yet many miracles indeed done by them for all that.

After this, I being upon a day at Sion, and talking with divers of the fathers together at the grate, they showed me that she had been with them, and showed me divers things that some of them misliked in her; and in this talking, they wished that I had spoken with her, and said, they would fain see how I should like her. Whereupon, afterward, when I heard that she was there again, I came thither to see her, and to speak with her myself. At which communication had in a little chapel, there were none present but we two: in the beginning whereof, I showed that my coming to her was not of any curious mind, any thing to know of such things as folk talked, that it pleased God to reveal and show unto her, but for the great virtue that I had heard so many years, every day more and more spoken and reported of her; I therefore had a great mind to see, and be acquainted with her, that she might have somewhat the more occasion to remember me to God in her devotion and prayers: whereunto

she gave me a very good virtuous answer : That as God did of his goodness far better by her than she, a poor wretch, was worthy, so she feared that many folk yet beside that spoke of their own favourable minds many things for her, far above the truth, and that of me she had many such things heard, that already she prayed for me, and ever would ; whereof I heartily thanked her. I said unto her : Madame, one Hellen, a maiden dwelling about Totnam, of whose trances and revelations there hath been much talking, hath been with me of late, and showed me that she was with you, and that after the rehearsal of such visions as she had seen, you showed her that they were no revelations, but plain illusions of the Devil, and advised her to cast them out of her mind. And verily she gave therein good credence unto you, and thereupon hath left to lean any longer unto such visions of her own : whereupon she saith, she findeth your words true, for ever since she hath been less visited with such things than she was wont to be before. To this she answered me : Forsooth, sir, there is in this point no praise unto me ; but the goodness of God, as it appeareth, hath wrought much meekness in her soul, who hath taken my rude warning so well, and not grudged to hear her spirit and her visions reproved. I liked her, in good faith, better for this answer, than for many of the things that I heard reported by her. Afterward she told me, upon that occasion, how great need folk have that are visited with such visions to take heed and prove well of what spirit they come of ; and in that communication she told me, that of late the Devil, in the likeness of a bird, was flying and fluttering about her in a chamber, and suffered himself to be taken ; and being in hands, suddenly changed, in their sight that were present, into such a strange ugly-fashioned bird, that they were all afraid, and threw him out at a window.

For conclusion : we talked no word of the king's

grace, or of any great personage else, nor in effect, of any man or woman, but of herself and myself: but after no long communication had, for ere ever we met, my time came to go home, I gave her a double ducat, and begged her to pray for me and mine, and so departed from her, and never spake with her after. Howbeit, of a truth, I had a great good opinion of her, and had her in great estimation, as you shall perceive by the letter that I wrote unto her. For afterwards, because I had often heard that many right worshipful folk, as well men as women, used to have much communication with her; and many folk are by nature inquisitive and curious, whereby they fall sometime into such talking, as better were to forbear; of which thing I nothing thought while I talked with her out of charity, therefore I wrote her a letter thereof; which since it may be, peradventure, that she brake or lost, I shall insert the very copy thereof in this present letter.

[The following were the very words.]

“Good madam, and my right dearly-beloved sister in our Lord God, after most hearty commendation: I shall beseech you to take my good mind in good worth, and pardon me, that I am so homely as of myself, unrequired, and also without necessity, to give counsel to you, of whom for the good inspirations and great revelations that it liketh Almighty God of his goodness to give and show, as many wise, well-learned, and very virtuous folk testify, I myself have need, for the comfort of my soul, to require and ask advice. For surely, good madam, since it pleaseth God sometimes to suffer such as are far under and of little estimation, to give yet fruitful advertisement to such other as are in the light of the spirit so far above them, that there were between them no comparison (as he suffered his high prophet Moses to be in some things advised and counselled by Jethro), I cannot, for the love that in our Lord I bear you, refrain to put you in remembrance of

one thing, which, in my poor mind, I think highly necessary to be by your wisdom considered, referring the end and the order thereof, to God and his Holy Spirit to direct you. Good madam, I doubt not but that you remember, that, in the beginning of my communication with you, I showed you, that I neither was, nor would be, curious of other men's matters, and least of all of any matter of princes, or of the realm, in case it so were, that God had, as to many good folks beforetime he hath, any time revealed unto you such things, I said unto your ladyship, that I was not only not desirous to hear of, but also would not hear of. Now, madam, I consider well that many folk desire to speak with you, which are not all peradventure of my mind in this point; but some hap to be curious and inquisitive of things that little pertain unto their parts; and some might peradventure hap to talk of such things as might peradventure after turn to much harm; as I think you have heard how the late Duke of Buckingham, moved with the fame of one that was reported for a holy monk, and had such talking with him, as after was a great part of his destruction, and disheriting of his blood, and great slander and infamy of religion. It sufficeth me, good madam, to put you in remembrance of such things, as I nothing doubt your wisdom, and the Spirit of God shall keep you from talking with any person, specially with high persons, of any such manner of things as pertain to princes' affairs, or the state of the realm, but only to commune and talk with any person, high and low, of such manner of things as may to the soul be profitable for you to show, and for them to know. And thus, my good lady, and dearly beloved sister in our Lord, I make an end of this my needless advertisement unto you, whom the blessed Trinity preserve and increase in grace, and put in your mind to recommend me and mine unto Him in your devout prayers. At Chelsea, this Tuesday,

by the hand of your hearty loving Brother and
Beadsman,

“THOMAS MORE, KNIGHT.”

At the receipt of this letter, she answered my servant, that she heartily thanked me. Soon after this there came to mine house the prior of the Charter-house at Shene, and one brother Williams with him, who nothing talked to me but of her, and of the great joy that they took in her virtue; but of any of her revelations they had no communication. But at another time brother Williams came to me, and told me a long tale of her being at the house of a knight in Kent, that was sore troubled with temptations to destroy himself; and none other thing we talked of, nor should have done of likelihood, though we had tarried together much longer, he took so great pleasure, good man, to tell the tale, with all the circumstances at length. When I came again another time to Sion, on a day in which there was a profession, some of the fathers asked me how I liked the nun? And I answered, that, in good faith, I liked her very well in her talking; howbeit, quoth I, she is never the nearer tried by that, for I assure you, she were likely to be very bad, if she seemed good, ere I should think her other, till she happened to be proved naught; and in good faith, that is my manner indeed, except I were set to search and examine the truth, upon likelihood of some cloaked evil; for in that case, although I nothing suspected the person myself, yet no less than if I suspected him sore, I would, as far as my wit would serve me, search to find out the truth, as yourself hath done very prudently in this matter; wherein you have done, in my mind, to your great laud and praise, a very meritorious deed, in bringing forth to light such detestable hypocrisy, whereby every other wretch may take warning, and be feared to set forth their own devilish

dissembled falsehood, under the manner and colour of the wonderful work of God ; for verily this woman so handled herself, with help of that evil spirit that inspired her, that after her own confession declared at St. Paul's Cross, when I sent word by my servant unto the Prior of the Charter-house, that she was undoubtedly proved a false deceiving hypocrite, the good man had had so good opinion of her so long, that he could at the first scantily believe me therein. Howbeit it was not he alone that thought her so very good, but many another right good men besides, as little marvel was upon so good report, till she was proved naught.

I remember me further, that, in communication between Father Rich and me, I counselled him, that in such strange things as concerned such folk as had come unto her, to whom, as she said, she had told the causes of their coming, ere themselves spake thereof : and such good fruit as they said that many men had received by her prayer, he, and such other as so reported it, and thought that the knowledge thereof should much pertain to the glory of God, should first cause the things to be well and sure examined by the ordinaries, and such as had authority thereunto ; so that it might be surely known whether the things were true or not, and that there were no letters intermingled among them, or else the letters might after hap to aweigh the credence of these things that were true. And when he told me the tale of Mary Magdalen, I said unto him ; Father Rich, that she is a good virtuous woman, in good faith, I hear so many good folk so report, that I verily think it true ; and think it well likely that God worketh some good and great things by her. But yet, as you wot well, these strange tales are no part of our creed ; and therefore before you see them surely proved, you shall have my poor counsel not to wed yourself so far forth to the credence of them, as to report them very surely for true, lest that if it should hap that they

were afterwards proved false, it might diminish your estimation in your preaching, whereof might grow great loss. To this he thanked me for my counsel, but how he used it after that, I cannot tell.

Thus have I, good Mr. Crumwell, fully declared to you, as far as myself can call to remembrance, all that I have ever done or said in this matter, wherein I am sure that never one of them all shall tell you any further thing of effect; for if any of them, or any man else, report of me, as I trust verily no man will, and I wot well truly that no man can, any word or deed by me spoken or done, touching any breach of my legal truth and duty toward my most redoubted sovereign, and natural liege lord, I will come to mine answer, and make it good in such wise as becometh a poor true man to do; that whosoever any such thing shall say, shall therein say untrue; for I neither have in this matter done evil, nor said evil, nor so much as any evil thing thought, but only have been glad, and rejoiced at them that were reported for good; which condition I shall nevertheless keep toward all other good folk, despite the false cloaked hypocrisy of any of these, no more than I shall esteem Judas the true apostle, for Judas the false traitor.

But so purpose I to bear myself in every man's company, while I live, that neither good man nor bad, neither monk, friar, nor nun, nor other man or woman in this world, shall make me digress from my truth and faith, either towards God, or towards my natural prince, by the grace of Almighty God; and as you therein find me true, so I heartily therein pray you to continue toward me your favour and good-will, as you shall be sure of my poor daily prayer; for other pleasure can I not do you. And thus the blessed Trinity, both bodily and ghostly, long preserve and prosper you.

I pray you pardon me, that I write not unto you of mine own hand, for verily I am compelled to for-

bear writing for a while, by reason of this disease of mine, whereof the chief occasion is grown, as it is thought, by the stooping and leaning on my breast, that I have used in writing. And thus, eftsoons, I beseech our Lord long to preserve you.

Sir Thomas More to the same.

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL—After right hearty recommendations, so it is that I am informed, that there is a bill put in against me into the higher house before the lords, concerning my communication with the nun of Canterbury and my writing unto her: whereof I not a little marvel, the truth of the matter being such as God and I know it is, and as I have plainly declared unto you by my former letters, wherein I found you then so good, that I am now bold eftsoons upon your goodness to desire you to show me the favour, that I might the rather by your good means, have a copy of the bill. Which seen, if I find any untrue surmise therein, as of likelihood there is, I may make mine humble suit unto the king's good grace, and declare the truth, either to his grace, or, by his grace's commandment, wheresoever the matter shall require. I am so sure of my truth toward his grace, that I cannot mistrust his grace's favour towards me, upon the truth known, nor the judgment of any honest man. Nor ever shall their loss in this matter grieve me, being myself so innocent as God and I know me, whatsoever should happen me therein, by the grace of Almighty God, who bodily and ghostly preserve you. At Chelsea, this present Saturday, by the hand of heartily all your own,

THOMAS MORE, KNIGHT.

*No. 4. (See page 232.)**Sir Thomas More to the King.*

May it like your Highness to call to your gracious remembrance, that at such time as of the great weighty office of your chancellor (with which so far above my merits or qualities, your highness had, of your incomparable goodness, honoured and exalted me) ye were so good and gracious unto me, as at my poor humble suit to discharge and disburden me, giving me licence, with your gracious favour, to bestow the residue of my life to come about the provision for my soul in the service of God, and to be your beadsman and pray for you. It pleased your highness further to say unto me, that, for the service which I before had done you, (which it then liked your goodness far above my deserving to commend) that in any suit that I should after have to your grace, that either should concern mine honour, (that word it liked your highness to use unto me,) or that should pertain unto my profit, I should find your highness good and gracious lord unto me. So is it now, gracious sovereign, that worldly honour is the thing whereof I have resigned both the possession and the desire, in the resignation of your most honourable office. And for worldly profit, I trust experience proveth, and daily more and more shall prove, that I never was very greedy thereof. But now is my most humble suit unto your excellent highness, to beseech the same somewhat to tender my poor honesty: howbeit principally, that, of your accustomed goodness, no sinister information move your noble grace to have any more distrust of my truth and devotion toward you, than I have or shall during my life give cause. For in this matter of the nun of Canterbury, I have unto your trusty counsellor, master Thomas Crumwell, by my writing as plainly declared the truth, as I possibly can. Which my declaration, of his duty toward your grace, and his

goodness towards me, he hath, I understand, declared unto your grace. In any part of all which my dealing, whether any other man may peradventure put any doubt or move any scruple or suspicion, that can I neither tell, nor lieth in my hand to *let* [hinder.] But unto myself, it is not possible any part of my said demeanor to seem evil, the very clearness of mine own conscience knowing in all the matter my mind and intent so good. Wherefore, most gracious sovereign, I neither will, nor yet can it well become me, with your highness to reason or argue the matter, but in my most humble manner prostrate at your gracious feet, I only beseech your grace, with your own high prudence and your accustomed goodness, to consider and weigh the matter. And if that in your so doing, your own virtuous mind shall give you, that, notwithstanding the manifold and excellent goodness that your gracious highness hath by so many manner of ways used unto me, I were a wretch of such a monstrous ingratitude as could with any of them all, or any other person living, digress from my bounden duty of allegiance towards your good grace; then desire I no further favour at your gracious hand, than the loss of all that ever I may lose, goods, lands, liberty, and finally my life withal; whereof the keeping of any part unto myself, could never do me penny-worth of pleasure; but only should my comfort be, that after my short life, and your long, (which, with continual prosperity to God's pleasure our Lord of his mercy send you,) I should once meet your grace again in heaven, and there be merry with you: where among mine other pleasures this should yet be one, that your grace should surely see there then, that howsoever you take me, I am your true beadsman now, and ever have been, and will be till I die, howsoever your pleasure be to do by me. Howbeit, if in the considering of my cause, your high wisdom, and gracious goodness, perceive (as I verily trust in God you shall,) that I none otherwise have

demeaned myself, than well may stand with my bounden duty of faithfulness towards your royal majesty, then, in my most humble wise, I beseech your most noble grace, that the knowledge of your true gracious persuasion in that behalf, may relieve the torment of my present heaviness conceived of the dread and fear (by that I hear such a grievous bill put by your learned counsel into your high court of parliament against me), lest your grace might, by some sinister information be moved any thing to think the contrary. Which if your highness do not, as I trust in God and your great goodness (the matter by your own high prudence examined and considered) ye will not; then in my most humble manner, I beseech your highness further, (albeit that in respect of my former request this other thing is very slight,) yet since your highness hath heretofore of your mere abundant goodness heaped and accumulated upon me (though I was thereto far unworthy) from time to time both worship and great honour too. Since I now have left all such things, and nothing seek to desire but the life to come, and pray for your grace the while, it may like your highness, of your accustomed benignity, somewhat to tender my poor honesty, and never suffer (by the means of such a bill put forth against me) any man to take occasion hereafter against the truth to slander me: which would yet; by the peril of their own souls, do themselves more hurt than me. This shall, I trust, settle my heart with your gracious favour, to depend upon the comfort of the truth and hope of heaven, and not upon the fallible opinion, or for certain words spoken by light and changeable people. And thus most dreaded and most dear sovereign Lord, I beseech the blessed Trinity, to preserve your most noble grace both body and soul, and all that are your well-willers, and amend all the contrary: among whom, if ever I be or ever have been one, then pray I God that he may, with my open shame and destruction, declare it.

No. 5. (See page 300.)

Extract of a Letter to Dr. Wilson.

You know well, good master Doctor, that at such time as the matter came in such manner in question, that my opinion, among others, was asked thereon, you and I many times talked it over together all the time after, in which I did, by the king's gracious commandment, both seek out and read, and communicate with all such as I knew made privy to the matter, to perceive what I might therein, upon both sides, and by *indifferent* (impartial) weighing of every thing as near as my poor wit and learning would serve me, to see to which way my conscience would incline, and as mine own mind should give me, so to make his highness report which way myself should hap to think therein, for other commandment had I never of his Grace with whom I communed on this subject; the most was with you, both on account of your substantial learning and your mature judgment: for I ever perceived in you that no man had a more faithful respect to the king's honour and surety, both of body and soul. I remember that in our often conferences on this matter, you and I, in all main points, were of one opinion. I remember well that we examined together the laws and councils, and consulted the fathers, Greek and Latin. Afterwards, when I signified to his Highness my poor opinion on the matter, which his Highness very graciously took in good part; and, as I saw that I could not do his Grace service, to his pleasure, by any farther progress in the matter, I determined with myself utterly to discharge my mind of any farther studying or musing on the business. And thereupon I sent home again such books as I had, saving that some I burned by the consent of you the owner, that were minded as myself was, to meddle no more in the matter. But then there were, at that time, other things more in the

affair, such as diverse faults found in the bull of the dispensation, by which the king's council, learned in the spiritual law, reckoned the bull vicious. Now, concerning those points I never meddled. Many things after that in this great matter grew in question, wherein I was neither sufficiently learned in the law, nor fully informed of the fact; and therefore I was not he that either murmured or grudged, made affections, held opinions, or kept *despicious* (disregard) in the matter, but like the king's true poor humble subject, daily prayed for the preservation of his Grace, and the Queen's Grace, and their noble issue, and of all the realm, without harm doing or intending to any man.

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